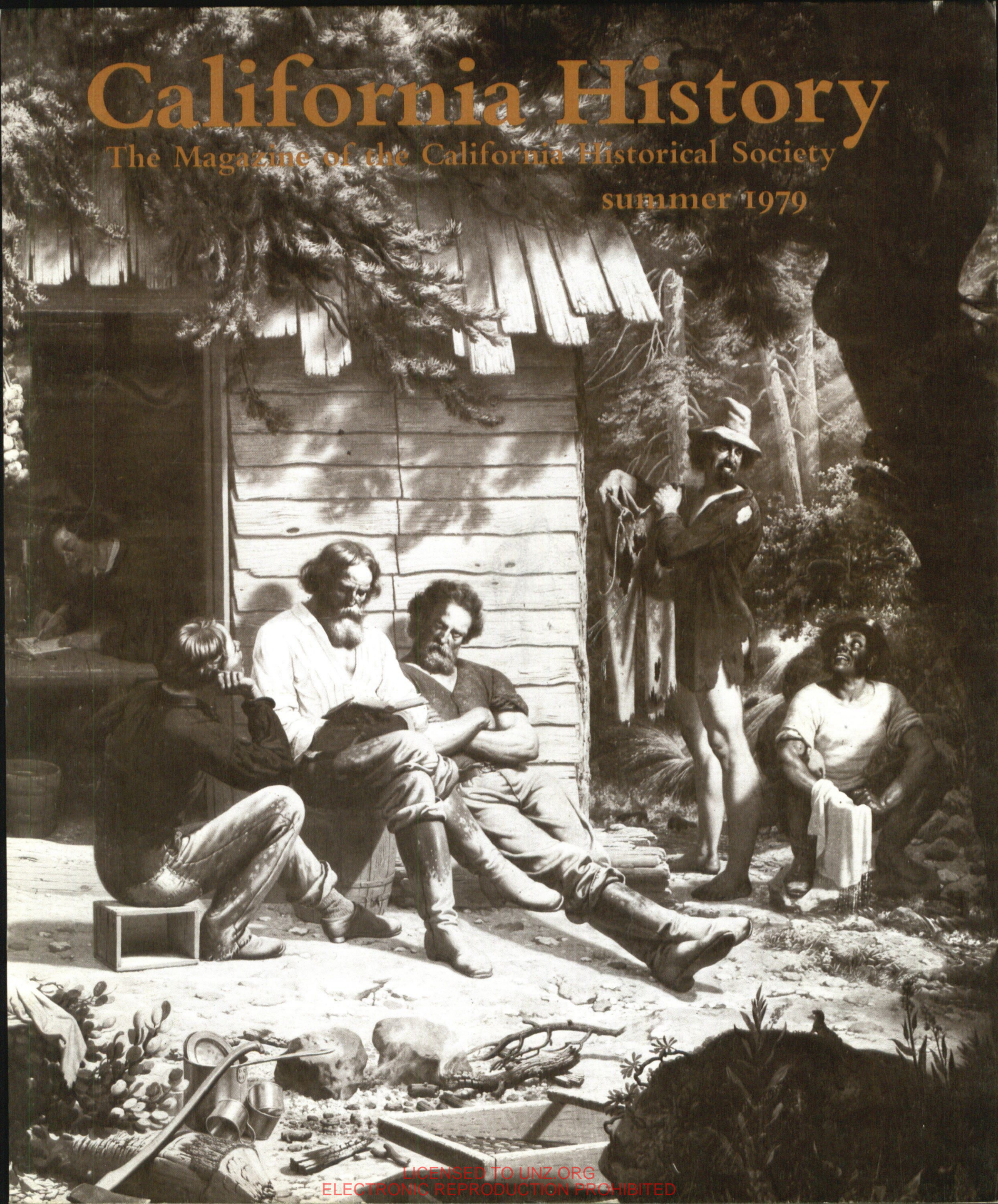


California History

The Magazine of the California Historical Society

summer 1979



THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, founded in 1871, preserves historical source materials and facilitates their use by both scholars and laymen. The Society's publications, programs, and library services seek to stimulate interest in the historical events and ideas that continue to shape life in California today. Membership is open to all.

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COVER:

In artist Charles Nahl's fascinatingly detailed version of the womanless world of the Forty-niners titled, "Sunday Morning in the Mines," some men read aloud, write letters home, wash tattered clothing, and smoke solitary pipefuls. Free from the tempering female hand, others brawl and carouse. For an assessment of how Argonauts viewed women and family, turn to the article beginning on page 128. *E. B. Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento.*

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The Magazine of the California Historical Society

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WORKING TO PROSPERITY:

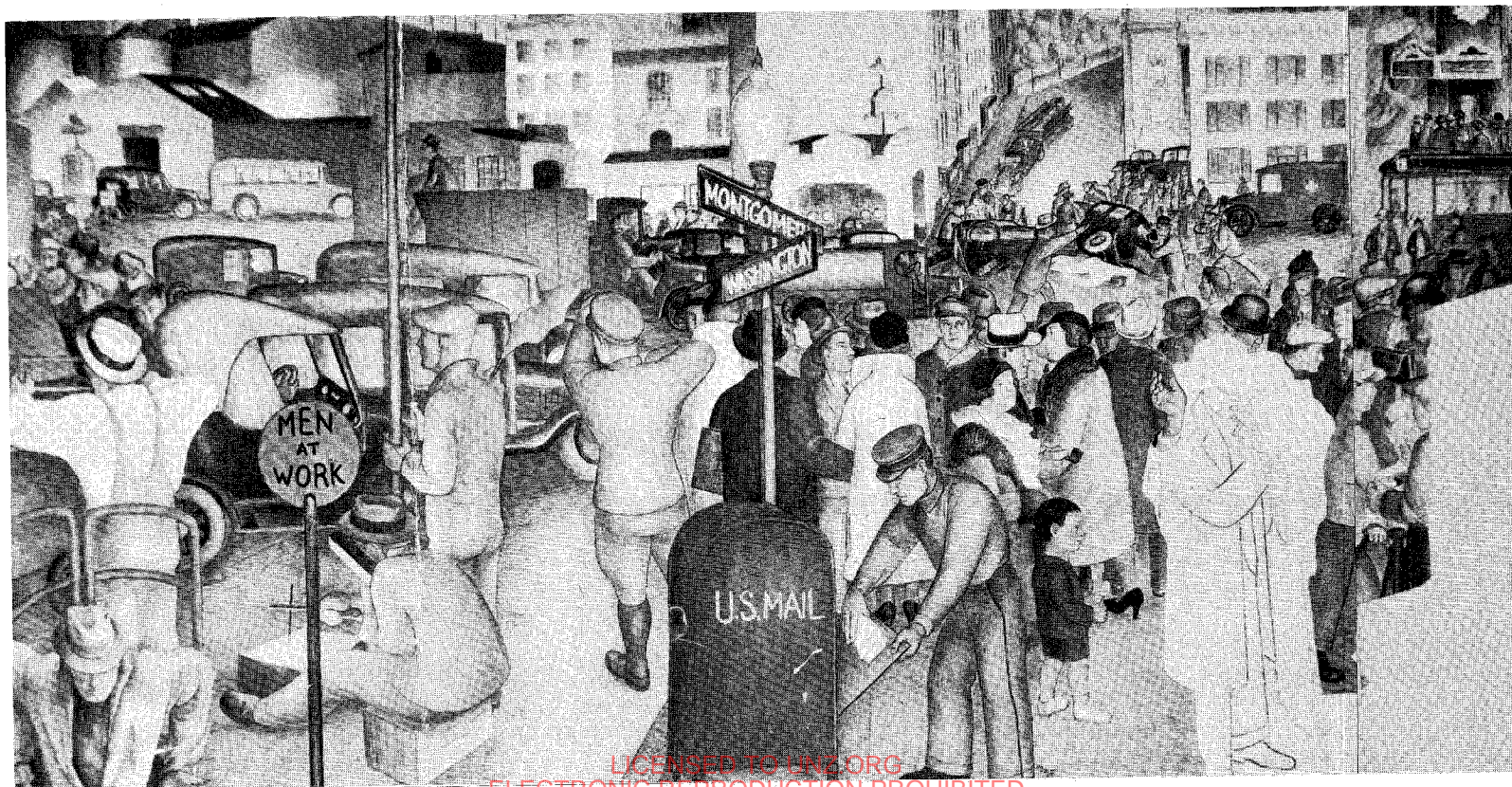
Announcing in 1933 that artists needed “to eat just like other people,” New Deal relief administrator Harry L. Hopkins gave his support to a groundbreaking plan to commission artists to produce public works of art.¹ Hopkins argued that “work relief,” as it was termed, was necessary because it not only provided otherwise jobless people with money to buy food, but also preserved their skills and restored their self-confidence.² In addition,

Steven Gelber, an Associate Professor of History at the University of Santa Clara, is interested in the social and cultural implications of the American economic system. He has written about business attitudes toward Negro employment and is doing research on the socio-economic origins of baseball.

Research for this article was partially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. An earlier version was presented to the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians at St. Louis in 1976.

work relief brought the government something in return for its money—unlike the more traditional “dole” or cash handout. In the midst of the greatest depression in American history, then, the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt committed itself to the idea that artists, no less than other Americans, deserved the opportunity to use their particular abilities in government employment until the private sector could once more provide them with a living.

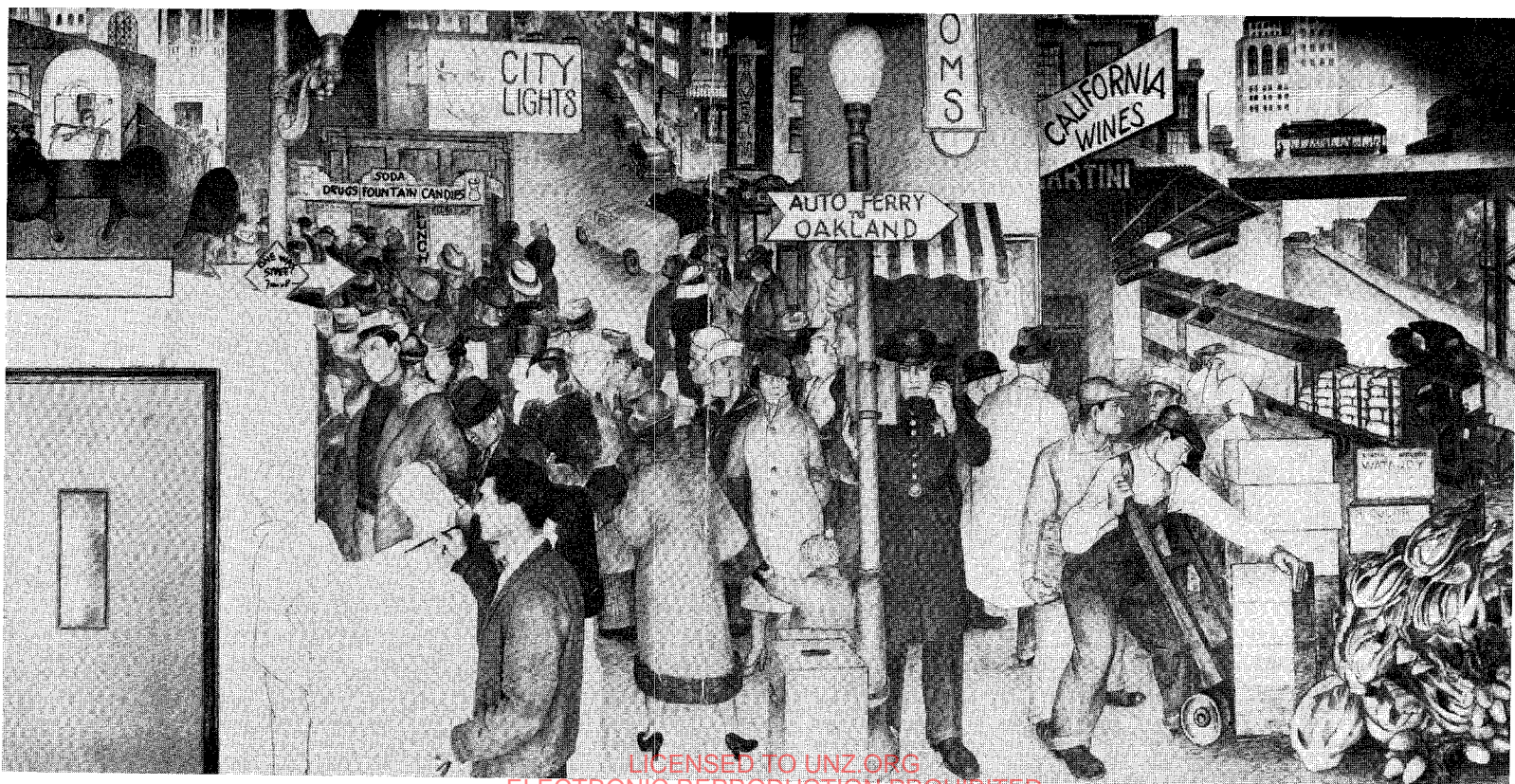
California artists responded to the federally supported art projects by covering the state—from Eureka in the north to Calexico in the south—with murals that celebrated the same values the New Dealers were seeking to preserve. Libraries, court houses, post offices and schools came alive with the color and images of the American people. These New Deal artists, like the president and



California's New Deal Murals

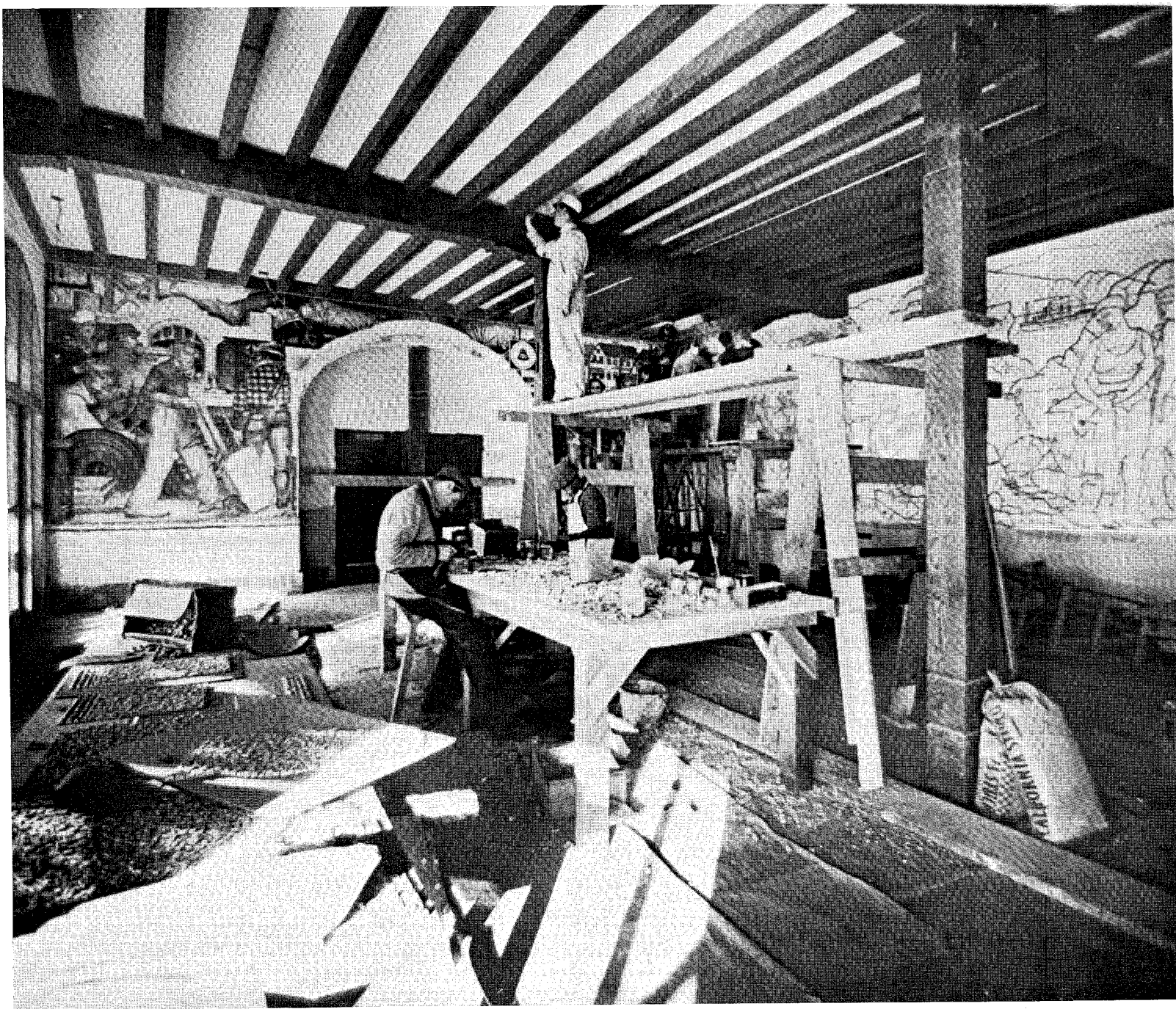
his administration, carried deep faith in the traditional American values of democracy and private enterprise. Despite the criticisms in the press to the contrary, the vast majority of the artists rejected Marxist revolutionary solutions to the nation's problems, and their images accordingly emphasized that work rather than political action would bring a return to prosperity. This is not to say that all California artists were politically conservative. As supporters of New Deal programs, most were strong liberals who applauded efforts by the federal government to alleviate the gross suffering caused by the country's economic collapse. Theirs was a commitment to change, it was revealed, but to change that would restore healthy social and economic conditions in America, not revolutionary change that would create a radically new society.

More than 200 artists painted government-sponsored murals in California during the New Deal years. Most of them were young, and many entered the government projects directly from art schools where they had been influenced by a wide variety of historical styles. Although both the individual styles of the mature painters and the historical influences on the younger ones are readily recognized in the murals, it is the uniformity of both form and content that most impress the contemporary viewer. With extraordinarily rare exceptions, the artists painted the same kinds of people doing the same kinds of things, and personal variations in style rarely carried their murals beyond a middle ground between academic traditionalism and modernism. While artists had to please local patrons, and common sense demanded some relation between a mural's subject matter and the



OVERLEAF: Victor Arnautoff's fresco Metropolitan Life in San Francisco's Coit Tower is typical of many New Deal murals in its depiction of everyday life in the 1930s. No overt signs of economic depression and social disruption mar the scene.

The Beach Chalet on San Francisco's Great Highway contains some of the finest examples of New Deal art in the state. Artisans in this picture are executing mosaics designed by Primo Cardio; in the background Lucien Labaudt paints a mural of city scenes. The Beach Chalet also contains a carved magnolia-wood stair railing with a marine life theme by Michael von Meyer.



place where it appeared, local differences proved less important than the similarities. No matter which federal agency sponsored it, no matter where it was painted, no matter whether it was a mural, easel painting, or print, California's New Deal art reflected the shared values of the artists and the New Deal administration.

Because of their belief in the underlying strength of American institutions, California's New Deal artists readily adapted their art to the requirements of the government's various art projects. Both the federal art bureaucrats and the artists started from the same set of assumptions and proceeded toward the same artistic goals. Both sought American subjects rendered in an American style for the American people. Conflicts among the government, the local audience, and the artists rarely occurred because all three groups knew what they liked. They liked the "American Scene."

The art movement known as the "American Scene" dominated the depression decade that was inevitably linked with the New Deal art projects. Surveying federally sponsored art in early 1938, California art critic Alfred Neumeyer concluded that "an overwhelming majority of the artists naively accept that most obvious and perhaps the most natural of all possible subject matter—the daily life of America." Displeased by the fact that "in every city you can now see how cows are milked," he asked, "What terrible spiritual poverty must we confess to our successors, if we believe that American life means nothing but canned food production or the banking business."³ But Neumeyer missed the entire point of New Deal art. The prosaic subjects did not reflect spiritual poverty. Quite the contrary, they were to represent the spiritual strength of the nation—its people and their work. Accordingly, people and work constituted the iconographic essence of the American Scene art movement.

The experimental modernism of cubism, futurism, and the like had been on the decline in America for more than a decade by the time of the great stock market crash

of late 1929.⁴ Even before Roosevelt took office, art critics had begun hailing the emergence of the new American Scene school of art.⁵ American Scene artists shunned the artistic "isms" of Paris and sought to paint American subjects in a representational style. Edward Bruce, head of the first government art program, recognized that the popular American Scene movement was totally compatible with his own belief in the value of bringing art out of museums to people, and in 1934 he officially designated "the American Scene" as the appropriate subject matter for all Public Works of Art Project (PWAP) art.⁶ Thus, the federal government did not originate and impose the American Scene on its artists, but rather commissioned the style and subject from a pre-existing trend. As PWAP, the first government art agency, observed in 1934, "The American artist had just gone through a period of eclecticism, but, a few years before the beginning of the project he turned his mind away from theorizing for its own sake toward the life and people of his own country."⁷

Within the American Scene, art historians identify two sub-groups of artists, Regionalists and Social Realists. Largely an iconographic distinction, Regionalists painted rural America, and Social Realists painted urban America. Both groups shunned the more abstract elements of European modernism, but the Regionalists went much further than the Social Realists in purging from their work any hint of non-objective styles. They painted little else but their native Midwest, making Regionalism "an art of rural and country views, apolitical in content, often nostalgic in spirit and usually unmindful of the effects of the Depression."⁸

Social Realists on the other hand were explicit critics of "the system," or at least of the effects of the economic system on people. They saw the depression as an inescapable reality, and they neither retreated to the cornfed myths of the bucolic Midwest nor glorified workers in the tradition of Socialist Realism. "Despite ample [radical] rhetoric," notes art historian Matthew



Baigell, Social Realists “portrayed their subjects as sad, drab, and spiritually depressed individuals rather than as heroic workers bursting with the kind of vitality capable of building a new society.”⁹

Most Social Realists painted in New York, which was the only state that had more extensive art projects than California. There they joined Regionalists to present a full spectrum of contrasting views of America in the thirties.¹⁰ In California, however, the Regionalists’ outlook totally eclipsed that of the Social Realists. Social Realism was an expression of disenchantment with the economic system that California artists did not share. Men and women who had found a place on the government payroll and who were far removed from both the cultural and political ferment of New York had little reason to upset the status quo. “On the whole the western projects were more naive,” observed Federal Art Project (FAP) administrator Joseph Danysh in a recent interview. “You could feel the cultural greenhorn quality. On the whole you found them trying harder, and on the whole you found much less of a politically social consciousness.” Danysh attributed the difference to the fact

that New York “had a very, very strong Communist element” that was missing in the Far West.¹¹

In California, New Deal artists accepted Regionalism, urbanized it where necessary, and applied its uniquely American perspective to the people, places, and history of their state. Theirs was an art of affirmative nationalism that found value in even the most everyday situations and things. The ability of California artists to find beauty in common objects drew notice from as far away as Boston, where in 1934 the *Christian Science Monitor* praised the artists who wove “such prosaic things as post office boxes, crates of vegetables, a ticker tape apparatus, factory buildings, and even an ash can into a poetic, if slightly grim, whole.”¹² Both artists and critics gloried in the fact that native artists were painting native subjects. Writing in 1937 about the work of San Diego sculptor Donal Hord, Stanton Macdonald-Wright boasted that Hord “has never been abroad, nor has he studied under the influence of foreign masters; his work represents in a marvelous way what the American artist is capable of doing—uninfluenced and untaught by over-seas dictates.”¹³

In the Modesto Post Office, Ray Boynton painted the quintessential Jeffersonian yeoman couple surrounded by the earth's bounties and the fruits of their labor—key images in the depression artists' search for stability.

The return to figurative art was particularly welcomed by the culturally isolated California artists, few of whom had ever accepted modern art and were pleased to find the pendulum of national taste swinging back in their direction. According to surrealist artist Reuben Kadish, who was also an administrator for the Federal Art Project (FAP) in San Francisco, California art was generally “mediocre and insipid.” The entire state, argued Kadish, was “saturated with provincialism.” The galleries would not show, the museums and patrons would not buy, and the critics would not praise anything that was not representational.¹⁴ Fortunately for California artists, the American Scene made provincialism a virtue.¹⁵

In the 1930s most segments of American society seemed able to agree that American Scene art was appropriate for the era. The public liked it because they could easily understand it. California artists liked it because it was not oriented toward Europe. Government administrators liked it because it supported rather than challenged New Deal values. Thus, while painting for the government imposed certain limits on what was acceptable art, most California artists had already imposed the same restrictions on themselves.

Murals in public buildings provided the artists with the most natural medium for expressing their American Scene/New Deal ideas. The new art was not only to be by and about Americans but also for Americans, and both artists and administrators agreed that art should be democratically accessible to the people rather than restricted to the salons of the rich.¹⁶ Most artists seem to have viewed wall painting as an interesting and legitimate alternative to easel work, particularly because murals were a way of returning to the public the art that it was financing. Artists rarely attributed any great philosophical implications to the mural programs, but accepted them as projects that would enliven public places with



Donal Hord's granite statue of a pioneer woman with a water jar stands outside the county administration building in San Diego. This WPA-FAP sculpture was criticized after its unveiling in 1939 because the figure looked “too Mexican.” Hord defended himself by proving that the model for “Guardian of the Water” was an Anglo woman.

art which reflected the spirit of the sponsors, the artists, and the viewers. Unlike their East Coast colleagues who unsuccessfully plumped for a permanent federal art program, most Californians appear to have accepted the projects as temporary. Only two project officials, Joseph Danysh in Northern California and Stanton Macdonald-Wright in Southern California, supported the position of *Los Angeles Times* critic Arthur Millier who denounced the private market as an "interpretation of individualism which conceived of society primarily as an arena of commercial exploitation."¹⁷ Danysh criticized easel paintings as "created by the isolated artist in his traditional attic and purchased, if at all, by a wealthy collector to be hoarded as an investment,"¹⁸ and Macdonald-Wright eagerly welcomed "a picture that, due to the new social consciousness, is not a collector's item, but one that harks back to a day in which decoration was publicly displayed on walls and thus became the property of all who were able to benefit by its inspiration."¹⁹

Little historical precedent existed for the upsurge of mural painting in the early thirties. America had no strong tradition of mural decoration in public buildings, and painters from the American Academy at Rome had dominated what little mural painting was done in the years prior to the New Deal. The School of Rome was academic, but according to one depression-era critic, it was "the academy of a particularly strangulated, debased and flat archaisticism—the dilution of models already diluted."²⁰ Unable to use the sectarian symbols of Christianity, academic muralists had attempted to replace them with symbols of civic virtue, but, observed the same critic, the images were "as devoid of real meaning as the ideas which they attempted to convey."²¹ Reflecting this despair with American mural painting, Nelson Rockefeller and Lincoln Kirstein's catalog to a 1932 exhibition of mural designs at New York's Museum of Modern Art dismissed most existing American murals as unimportant and urged American artists to follow the lead of the Mexican muralists.²²

Nowhere was Kirstein's advice more closely followed than in California. The influence of the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera was particularly pronounced in the works of many of the state's artists. With David Alfaro Siqueiros and José Clemente Orozco, Rivera had revived the almost lost technique of fresco, or painting with watercolors on wet plaster, in his murals of the early 1920s, and the idea of painting on the walls of buildings soon attracted the attention of United States artists. Maxine Albro, Clifford Wight, Marion Simpson, Bernard Zakheim, and Victor Arnautoff, all prominent California New Deal muralists, had worked with Rivera either in Mexico or in California, where he executed several commissions.²³ Rivera's government-sponsored Mexican murals, his highly decorative style, and his use of themes relating to the common people provided an irresistible model for California artists seeking to develop their own folk-nationalist style.

The influence of the leftist Mexican painter on New Deal art in California has given it an unjustified reputation for political radicalism, however.²⁴ With few exceptions California artists accepted the body of Rivera's art and rejected its soul—its revolutionary message.²⁵ Despite occasional confrontations and the ever-present spirit of Rivera, New Deal art in California was overwhelmingly noncontroversial. Rather than painting Marxist sentiments into their murals, the New Deal artists expressed an indigenous cultural nationalism which emphasized the strengths of American society both in the past and in the present. It is one of the great ironies of the federal art projects that their painters affirmed traditional American values in the visual style of a Mexican Marxist.

Three of the men who studied with the master muralist, however, shared his politics as well as his style. They worked together on San Francisco's Coit Tower, the first major achievement of the initial PWAP art project in California. As a result of this project, artists Victor Arnautoff, Bernard Zakheim, and Clifford Wight, along



Maxine Albro, one of the many California artists who studied with the Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, specialized in mosaics which the federal art administrators considered particularly appropriate for the state because of its Mediterranean climate. This photograph shows technician Primo Caredio and Albro setting marble tesserae (tiles) over a doorway at what was San Francisco State Teachers College.

This mosaic mural in Los Angeles' Edison Junior High School by internationally famous artist Stanton Macdonald-Wright used individually shaped tiles to convey different textures.





A longshoremen's union picket line protested the covering in 1948 of a section of Anton Refregier's mural in the Rincon Annex Post Office. The controversial panel depicted the 1934 general strike in San Francisco.

with John Langley Howard, who had not studied with Rivera, managed at the outset of the New Deal to impart a lasting radical flavor to federally supported art. Although some twenty-five artists painted murals in the cylindrical tower on Telegraph Hill, it was the four artists' criticisms of American society that attracted the public's attention.

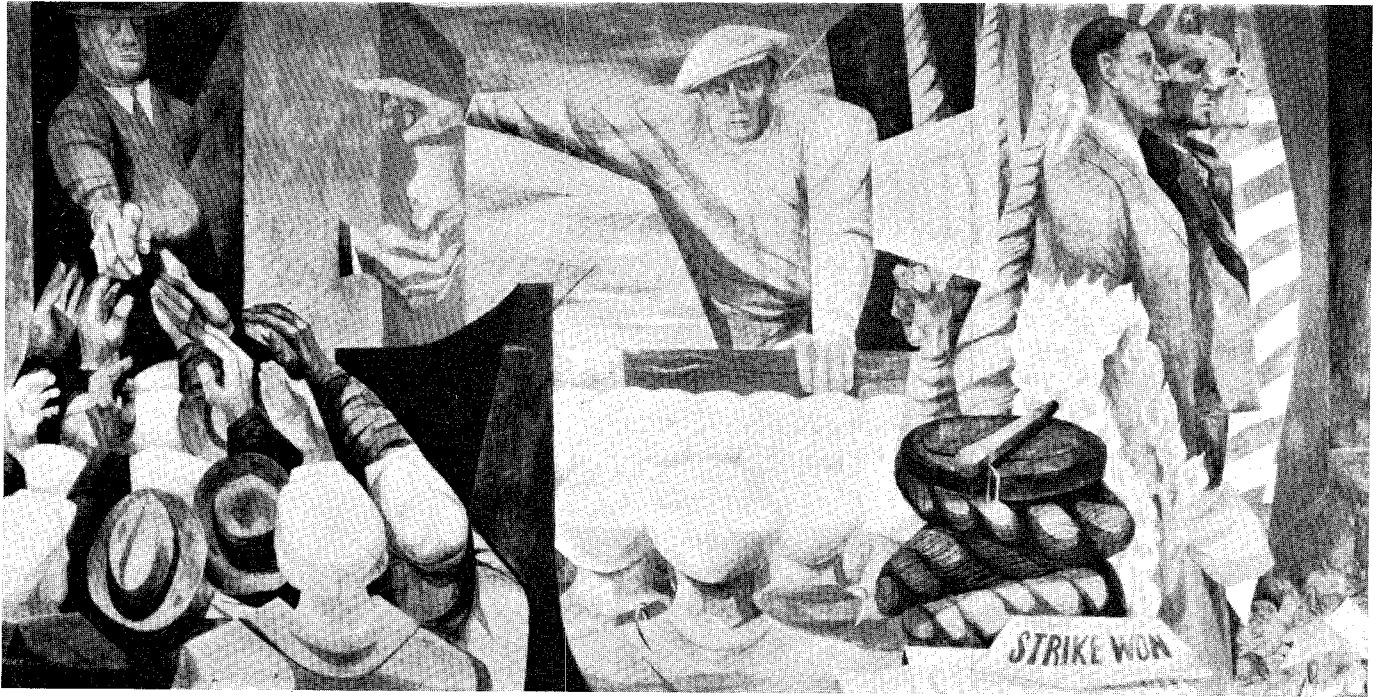
Arnautoff, a well known radical who eventually left the United States to return to his native Soviet Union, included two left-wing periodicals—*The Masses*²⁶ and *The Daily Worker*—in the news kiosk featured in his mural entitled "Metropolitan Life."²⁷ Although the mural depicted a prosperous scene, its benign mood was disturbed by an automobile accident and by a well-dressed businessman being relieved of his wallet at gun point.²⁸ In his "California Industrial Scenes," John Langley Howard included a group of striking miners, one of whom holds a copy of the radical paper, *The Western Worker*.²⁹ In another part of his mural, Howard made an even stronger statement which juxtaposed a new hydroelectric plant with an angry-faced unemployed couple forced to wash their clothes and pan for gold in the river below the dam. So that no one missed the point, Howard added a group of chauffeur-driven rich folk who gape in amusement near the poor people's tent. Finally, Bernard Zakheim's library scene showed a man pulling a copy of Karl Marx's *Capital* off a book

shelf, while others read newspapers featuring headlines critical of the Hoover administration and fascism in Europe.³⁰

The political statements made in the murals by Arnautoff, Howard, and Zakheim aroused considerable public opposition but were allowed to survive. Clifford Wight's hammer and sickle, the communist symbol which appeared in a series of medallions illustrating the range of political philosophies existing in America, did not. The San Francisco Parks Commission, the agency which administered the tower, concluded that American philosophies did not range that far left on the political spectrum and summarily locked the tower until the offending symbol was chipped from the wall.³¹

The era of federal art in California closed as it began—with a fight over radical imagery in murals. In 1943, New Yorker Anton Refregier received a commission to paint the "History of San Francisco" in the Rincon Annex Post Office in San Francisco. The year was the last year of federal art sponsorship, and the murals themselves were not painted until after World War II. No longer feeling compelled to illustrate how hard work could end the economic depression, Refregier instead showed the past with all its blemishes, including vigilantes, anti-Chinese riots, and the waterfront strike of 1934.³²

In 1953 during the McCarthy period, Congress held



In the original version of Anton Refregier's depiction of the 1934 waterfront strike, the central figure was a recognizable likeness of strike leader Harry Bridges. The artist made the final figure anonymous in hopes of avoiding controversy. He failed.



Although the overall impression of Victor Arnautoff's mural in Coit Tower is benign, the artist alluded to social problems by including images of an automobile accident, a holdup, and radical political newspapers.

The powerful anti-war message of The Last Enemy, a print by Edward Hagedorn, reflects the isolationist foreign policy of depression America, but its stark calaveras style sharply contrasts with the American Scene realism of most New Deal art.

hearings to determine if these offending murals in the San Francisco post office should be removed. Testifying for removal, a spokesman for the American Legion complained that "the murals do not reflect the romantic and inspiring history of California, and on the other hand tend to ridicule and slander the State and its pioneers. . . . These murals are not a matter of beauty or inspiration. They are depressing."³³

Ironically, this statement by an anti-communist conservative could easily have been uttered by most California New Deal artists who painted fifteen years earlier. With only the very few exceptions noted above, California artists did not paint "depressing" murals during the Great Depression. They painted romantic and inspiring historical scenes because they looked to America's history as a source of strength in the battle with pressing contemporary problems.³⁴ Accordingly, they refrained from painting images of contemporary problems because they believed that art should be inspiring for people. Having faith that the New Deal would revive the system that had operated so well in the past, they preferred to paint the world as it should be or as it should have been, not as it was.

The Coit Tower incident at the beginning of the New Deal and the Rincon Annex controversy at the end bracketed a decade during which four major (and one minor) government art programs covered California's walls with visions of liberal inspiration rather than radical anger. Although the public applied the generic term "WPA" to all federally sponsored art, the Roosevelt administration in fact created an administrative nightmare of five, sometimes overlapping, arts projects. Beginning in the fall of 1933, the government began subsidizing unemployed artists with the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). After the agency's demise in 1934, it was followed by the State Emergency Relief Administration (SERA) and then in 1935 by the Treasury Relief



Art Program (TRAP) and the Federal Art Program (FAP) of the Works Projects Administration. In addition to these relief programs, the Treasury Department commissioned art in federal buildings through its Section of Painting and Sculpture (Section). Section artists were hired purely on merit and did not have to pass a financial means test.³⁵ PWAP, TRAP, and the Section seem to have reflected the aesthetic values of Treasury Department administrator Edward Bruce who favored the American Scene.³⁶ On the other hand, the director of the FAP, Holger Cahill, administered with much looser reins.³⁷ Interestingly, the greater freedom enjoyed by FAP artists seems unreflected in their work. Murals painted under Bruce's guidelines or under Cahill's policy of benign neglect were remarkably similar.

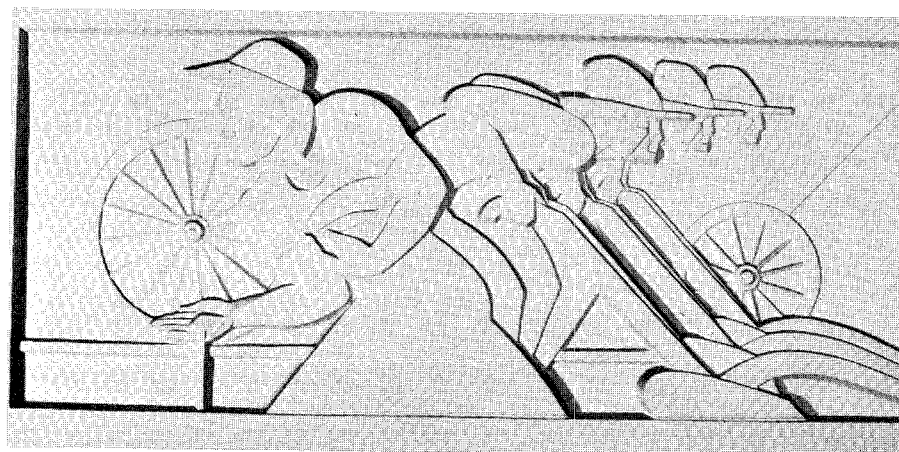
Artists hired on all projects except the Section also produced easel paintings and prints. A study of this non-mural art—which by its form is less public in nature—provides some opportunity to measure the extent to which the murals reflected the artists' personal values as well as the demands of federal officials.

Generally, easel art produced for the PWAP and TRAP followed the American Scene line laid down by Edward Bruce.³⁸ Artists who worked on the FAP, however, had no mark to toe. They were free to paint what-

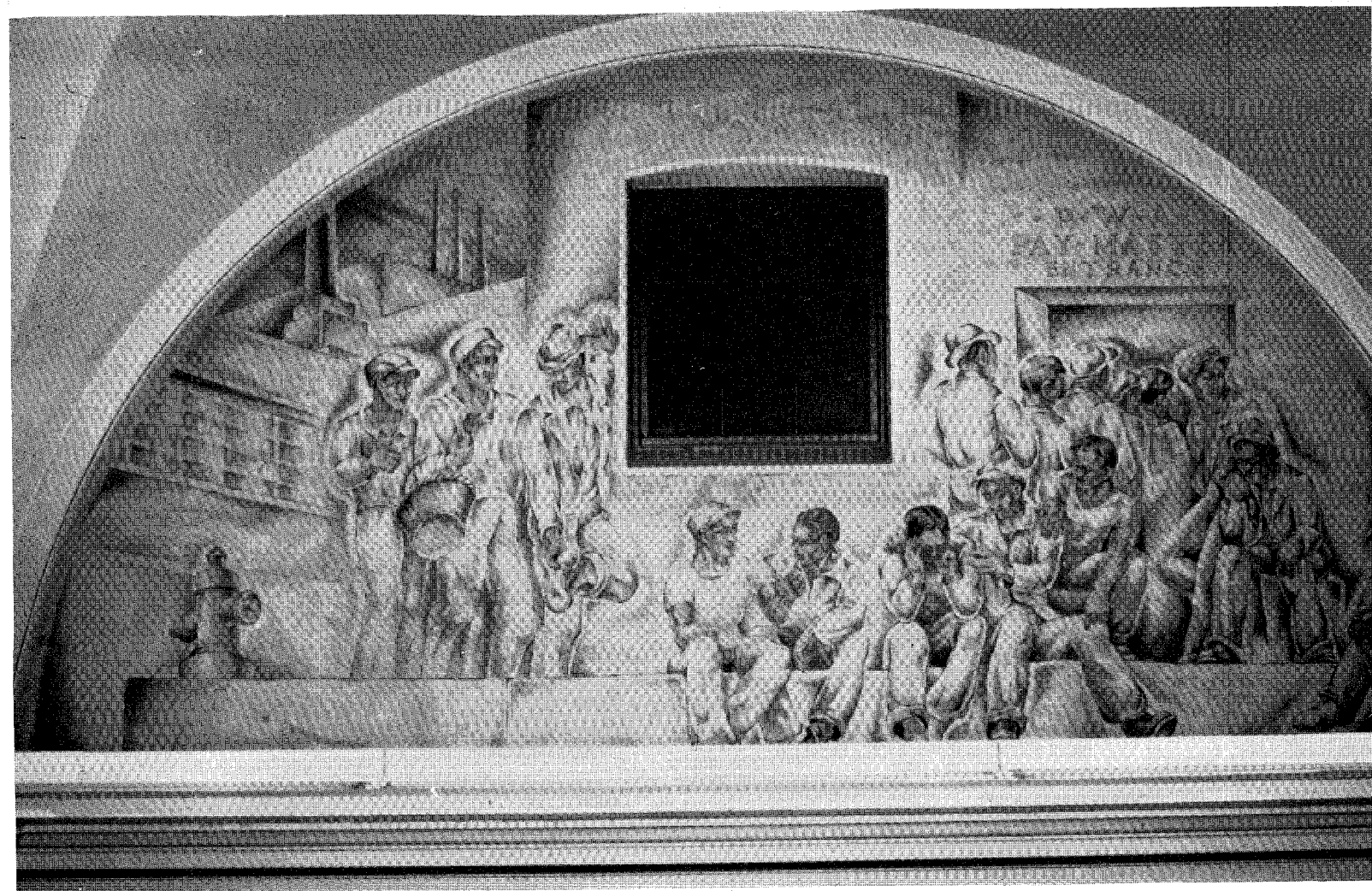
TOP LEFT: Bernard Zakheim was one of four artists who included radical political commentary in their Coit Tower murals. In Zakheim's library scene, one patron pulls down a volume by Karl Marx, while others read newspapers with headlines expressing Zakheim's views.



ABOVE: Painted in 1937, this mural by Reuben Kadish at San Francisco State Teachers College is an extremely rare example of surrealism in New Deal art. Although the fresco is now bisected by a wall, it has fared better than many school murals which were destroyed when the buildings were made earthquake-proof.



LEFT: This stylized 1937 cast-stone relief in the Santa Barbara Post Office by William O. Atkinson shows farmers plowing and farmers' wives sowing seeds. A companion relief features Indians as aggressive enemies and religious converts.



ever they liked in whatever style they preferred, and there were also many more artists associated with the FAP. Despite the large number of works produced, however, very little of the FAP easel art remains. Most was destroyed during World War II when warehouse storage space was needed by the armed forces.³⁹ What remains are those easel paintings which were accepted by public institutions. Having thus passed the test of public taste and entered museums, it is not surprising that most of these pieces resemble the murals both in subject and style.⁴⁰ But there is reason to believe that even the paintings which were never hung in galleries conformed to the same pattern. For example, the easel works of San Jose's Herman Volz, the only California artist who managed to purloin his paintings back from the FAP, show the same preoccupation with American Scene subjects as do the murals.⁴¹

Despite the rarity of New Deal easel paintings, com-

parison can be made based on the period's mural art and the extant "portable" art contained in the California Museum of Art print collection. Stored in the Oakland Museum, this collection of more than 850 prints by almost 300 artists contains an excellent cross-sampling of lithographs, etchings, and wood engravings made by artists from California and other states.⁴² Allowing for individual stylistic variations, review of this important source indicates that the prints are as similar and homogeneous as the murals. An occasional example of "modernist" work appears in the collection, such as Helen Lundberg's post-Surrealist "Table, Door and Books," or Edward Hagedorn's anti-war series of *calaveras*, which use skeletons to comment on social issues. But Arthur Murphy's critically acclaimed lithographs of the Bay Bridge are much more typical.⁴³ These finely executed prints of muscular men and structural steel convey as well as any mural the New Deal theme of prosperity

Unemployed workers sit on the curb of Charles Kassler's mural in Beverly Hills, as others line up at the WPA paymaster's office. Neither the government nor the local residents protested this rare pictorial admission of depression unemployment problems.

through work.⁴⁴ New Dealers by choice not coercion, and willing if de facto spokesmen for the administration, mural and easel artists employed on all four arts projects expressed their optimistic faith in America in conventional and prosperous images.

Even the lone mural effort in the entire state of California that showed a group of obviously unemployed men was painted not to criticize but to underscore the virtues of the New Deal.⁴⁵ Although Charles Kassler's series of lunettes in the Beverly Hills Post Office might at first appear to have been an isolated example of radical iconography, Kassler was in fact a moderate New Deal Democrat who wished to depict the "administration's effort to solve the unemployment problem."⁴⁶ In the first lunette of his series, Kassler painted artists like himself working on a federal art project. In the second mural he showed them lined up at the paymaster's window, and finally he painted them being "met by their dear ones who help them buy with this money the necessities of life for which they have been sorely in need." The unemployed men shown sitting on the curb in front of the pay windows, Kassler explained, were merely a visual device to point up the benefits of the work programs.

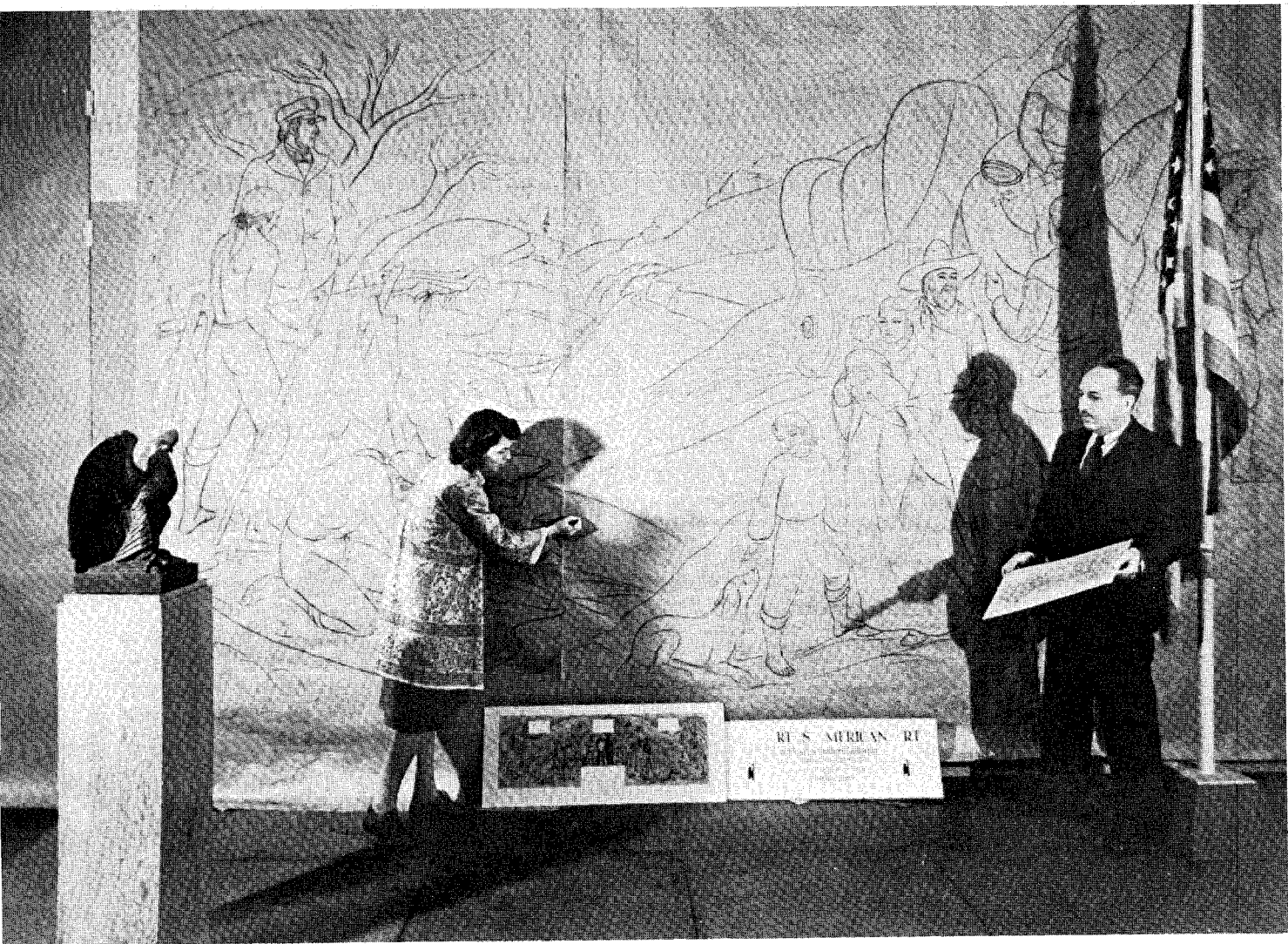
Kassler chose the Public Works Administration as his theme for a number of reasons, in part because he felt himself to have "a very vital part in the project," which, he believed, was saving the American way of life. The "extremely American" PWA subject, said Kassler, is "a matter of historical record" obviously worth artistic attention. Even the painters depicted in the mural were shown working on a mural of bison, a "truly American scene," while several sculptors carved a statue group entitled "Abundance" that Kassler described as "distinctly representative of our national resources."⁴⁷

Not a word of objection came from Washington about the content of the Kassler murals, although several Treasury Relief Art Project (TRAP) personnel questioned some elements of his composition, especially his

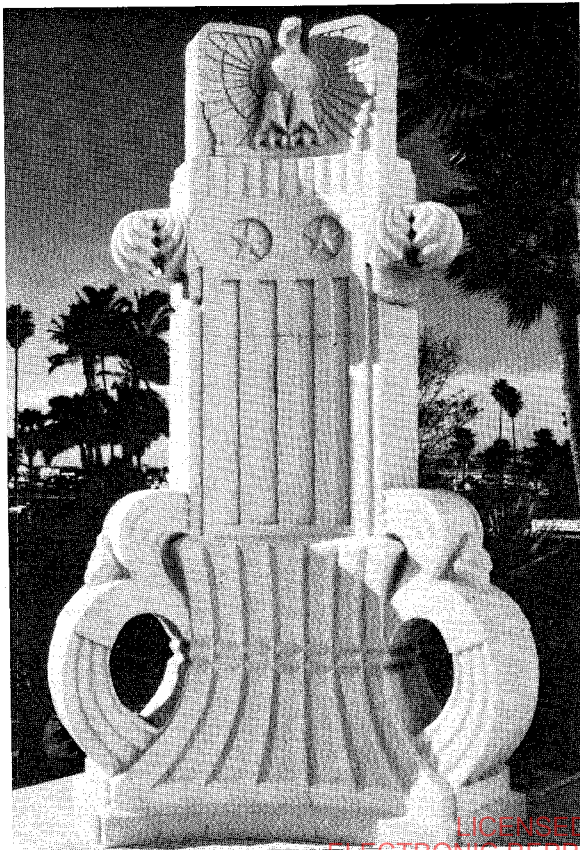
crowding of figures.⁴⁸ Kassler responded that people did in fact crowd around paymasters' windows and that he was trying to convey a sense of the crowd's "human joy in being paid for their work."⁴⁹ As an artist Kassler was not painting unemployment and the collapse of the American system, then, but working people returning to a fully functioning society. In a 1937 letter to a federal official, Kassler confidently predicted that work projects would revitalize the free-market economy through "more employment, more money circulated, greater consumption, larger profits, happier people."⁵⁰

Kassler's dramatic paean to the New Deal was unique in California federal art, but his commitment to the Roosevelt administration was shared by most artists. "We were all very ardent New Dealers," recalled Edward Biberman, a Los Angeles artist, "and when we found [New Deal policies] reflected in the art programs we were even more enthusiastic."⁵¹ Lorser Feitelson, Los Angeles artist and FAP administrator, remembered that most artists "saw Roosevelt as . . . the leader of the coming civilization."⁵² This is hardly surprising, considering that the government was employing them to continue in their art, for which they were naturally grateful. "You couldn't sell paintings, nobody was buying pictures, what were we to do?" asked San Diego painter Belle Baranceanu. Finding a job on the FAP, Baranceanu remembers, meant a "chance to do your own thing. . . . I voted for Roosevelt because he had made it possible for this to come about."⁵³

Baranceanu's pragmatic political commitment to New Deal liberalism was typical of California's artists. After an inspection tour of the West in 1937, TRAP administrator Cecil Jones reported that western artists were not "demanding assistance from the government, but only asking for a chance to earn a decent living."⁵⁴ Section staffer Bernard Reufberg noted that California artists frequently expressed their appreciation for the "extreme kindness" shown to them by the Section. "This should be exceedingly gratifying when one realizes that



Director of the Southern California Federal Art Project Stanton Macdonald-Wright observes Los Angeles artist Helen Lundeborg, who is preparing a mural cartoon. The unidentified mural was probably part of a series of historical scenes in the Los Angeles Hall of Records that has been destroyed.



New Deal nationalism manifested itself in the ever-present symbol of the state, the American eagle.

it comes from a class of people who are supposed to be in the majority 'leftists,' " but, concluded Reufberg, "I have never found them to be so."⁵⁵ Mill Valley sculptor Richard O'Hanlon remembered a wide gap between the minority of political activists and the majority of artists. O'Hanlon recalled that whenever he and his wife went to meetings or parties with the radicals, "art never came up, and this was a very boring thing for me."⁵⁶

To some extent the artists appear to have endorsed the popular view that a little suffering hones the fine edge of creativity, and they were reluctant to blame society for their plight. Sculptor Jacques Schnier, who held an engineering degree from Stanford, was by choice "living and working in one room and living from hand to mouth." "It was something of my own doing, and I couldn't see how you could blame society for not making life smoother."⁵⁷

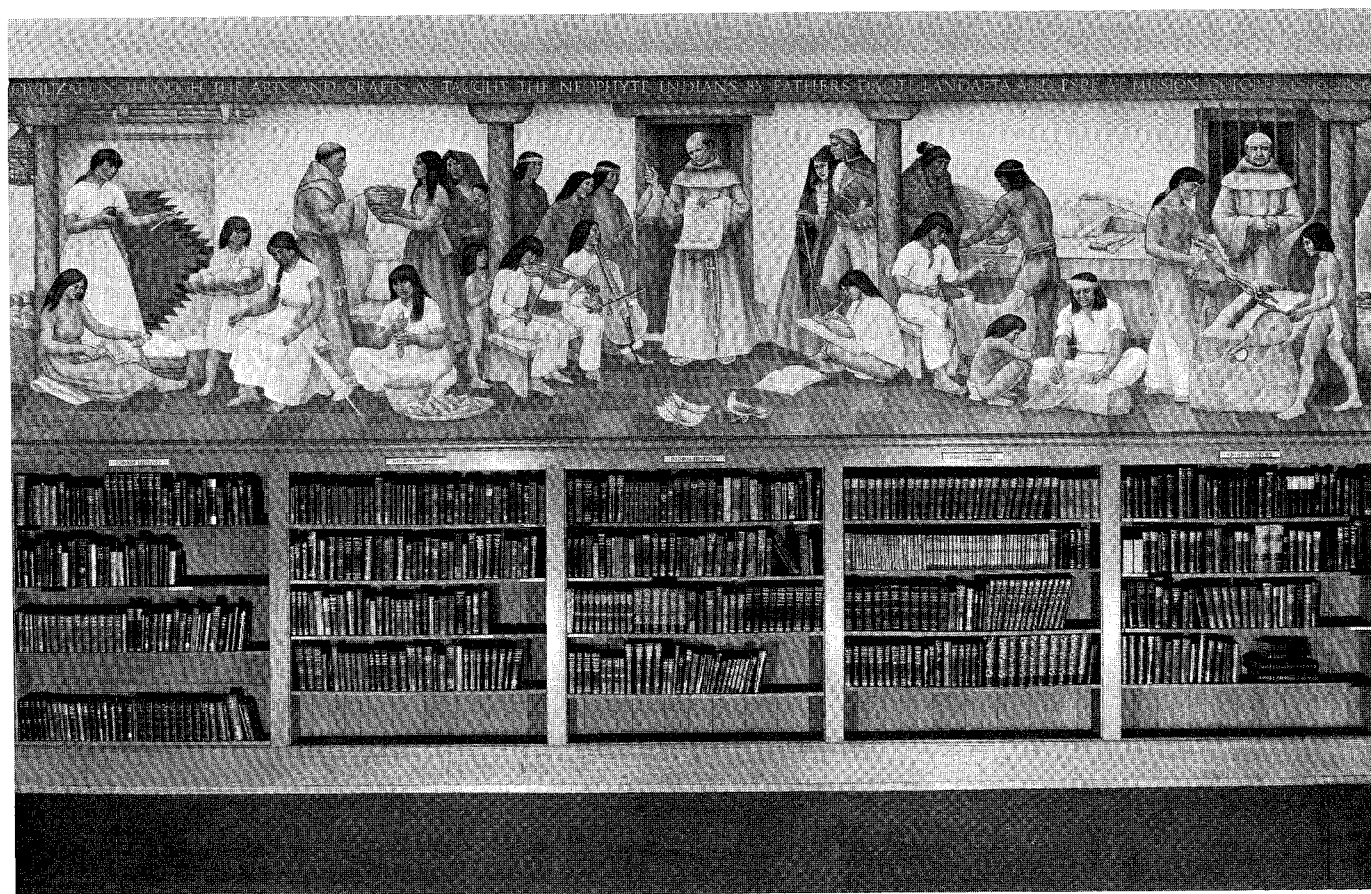
Although most artists retreated from political activism and rejected art as an appropriate medium for expressing partisan ideology, most nevertheless believed that their art should make a social statement. Los Angeles artist Henri de Kruif articulated the belief that artists should play a social role without producing obvious political propaganda. Impressed with the PWAP, in 1934 DeKruif wrote an article calling upon the government to institute a more permanent program of support for the arts. Many artists, he urged, would welcome an opportunity to paint "public works intended to visualize the aims, ideals, and achievements of the New World. Such works would rise above the sinister plane of pragmatic propaganda and put it to shame." In defining "American ideals, past, present and future," as the proper themes of federally supported art, De Kruif argued that merely repairing "the breaches in our economic and social security" was not enough. People also need symbols

"akin to religion," he reflected. Recognizing that the words and actions of President Roosevelt were "forging new symbols to add to the old," he concluded, "If these symbols take form in the art of our own best craftsmen, the people will respond perpetually to their meaning."⁵⁸

Optimistic and affirmative, the specific message of the art of the thirties is not immediately evident to today's viewer. Iconographically the most obvious image of New Deal nationalism was the symbol of the state, the American eagle. Shown with its wings spread and frequently perched on a fasces, the eagle, a Roman symbol of strength, belligerently proclaims the power of the nation.⁵⁹ New Deal artists frequently gave their eagles a somewhat faceted and modern appearance, thus rendering an image from the past in an appropriate style for the depression "moderne" buildings on which they usually perched.

Traditionally, artists have used images of single allegorical figures and national heroes to personify abstract ideas and patriotic values. When California artists depicted allegorical figures, if at all, they often combined them with the heroes of history. Thus, "The Law" by sculptor Archibald Garner in the Los Angeles Federal Building was not only Americanized by a quotation from Abraham Lincoln on the tablet carried by the figure, but it was paired with a James Hansen statue of Lincoln standing in the same lobby. Similarly, a half-nude embodiment of the firmament in San Francisco's George Washington High School was surrounded by thirteen stars representing the original colonies and by 1600 square feet of mural images depicting the life of George Washington.⁶⁰

Eagles, allegorical figures, and heroes are the familiar symbols of national pride, but they rarely appeared in California's WPA murals. Instead, whole scenes were endowed with a greater symbolic meaning, and the allegorical nature of many New Deal murals was reflected in the startling anonymity of the figures, which are archetypes rather than individuals.⁶¹ These general-



ized figures engaged in the application of American values were meant to serve as moral encouragement for the public. By illustrating American values in scenes of everyday life, both past and present, artists sought to make the ideals immediately relevant to average people who might not understand more elevated symbols like heroes and allegorical figures.

The history which appears in the murals by California artists does not reflect a full spectrum of historical events, but rather those aspects which served the artists' didactic purposes. The "search for a usable American past" was a widespread cultural phenomenon in the 1930s, and intellectuals of every discipline looked backward to find solutions to contemporary problems.⁶² Since work and struggle against adversity were values held in high esteem, artists used history to illustrate how goals could be reached through sacrifice and hard work. Commenting on Victor Arnautoff's George Washington High School murals, *San Francisco Chronicle* critic Alfred Frankenstein praised the artist for not painting a "prissy, Parson Weemsish" Washington, but the "granite, laconic, human being who fought a nation into

existence on the edge of a wilderness against the odds of nature and of man."⁶³

Reflecting the artists' search for special values, pre-Columbian Indian societies received short shrift in most New Deal murals. Native American culture, if shown at all, only prefaced the arrival of European civilization. California history seemingly began with the arrival of the Franciscan missionaries who were repeatedly shown instructing obedient Indians in spiritual and material affairs. Willingly receiving the benefits of the superior European culture, the Indians helped mural viewers feel secure in their values, despite hard economic times, and proud of their treatment of Native Americans.⁶⁴ Indians who refused to accept the white man's civilization accordingly were rendered as obstacles to be overcome: William Atkinson's Indians in Santa Barbara interfered with the US mail service, Anton Refregier's Indians in San Francisco's Rincon Annex Post Office attacked California-bound settlers, and the flying arrow of Primo Caredio's Indian in San Francisco's Beach Chalet curiously pointed the way to the men's room and menaced its vulnerable occupants.⁶⁵

Edith Hamlin's tempera mural for Mission High School in San Francisco depicted arts and crafts at Mission Dolores in the Spanish period.

Bruce Ariss' Monterey High School mural perpetuated the California myth of farmers living and working on the land.



California's half-century interlude of Spanish colonial culture before the establishment of Yankee civilization proved particularly popular with New Deal artists who clearly delighted in the romantic Californio lifestyle. Dashing vaqueros, fiestas replete with beautiful señoritas and strumming guitars, and bull and bear fights all appear in the public art of the thirties.⁶⁶ But nobody in the artists' colonial California worked for a living, and a society which played rather than worked could not endure. Hence, as the artists saw it, the Catholic Californios were destroyed by their carefree style of life in an implicit warning to those depression victims who sought easy answers to life's problems.

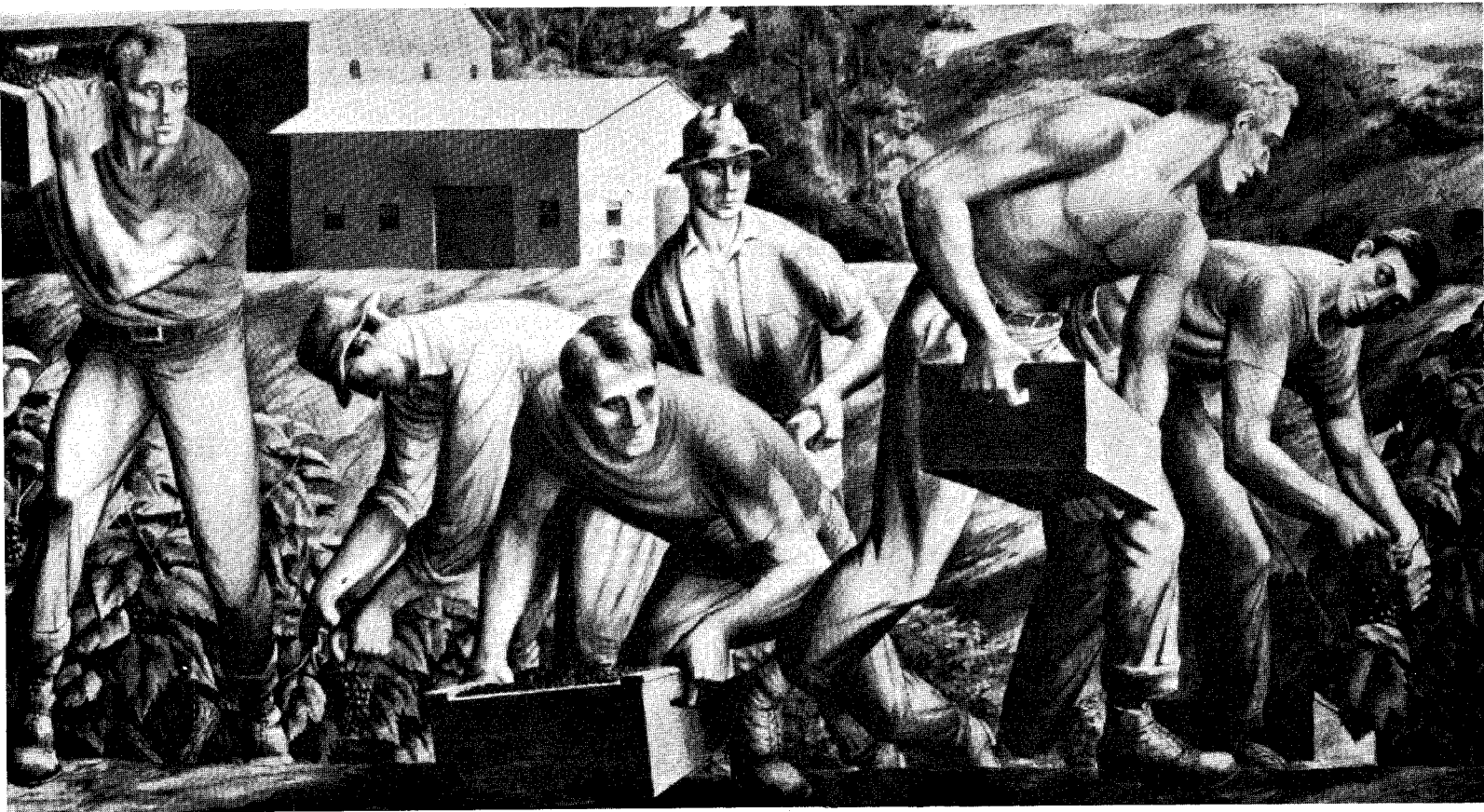
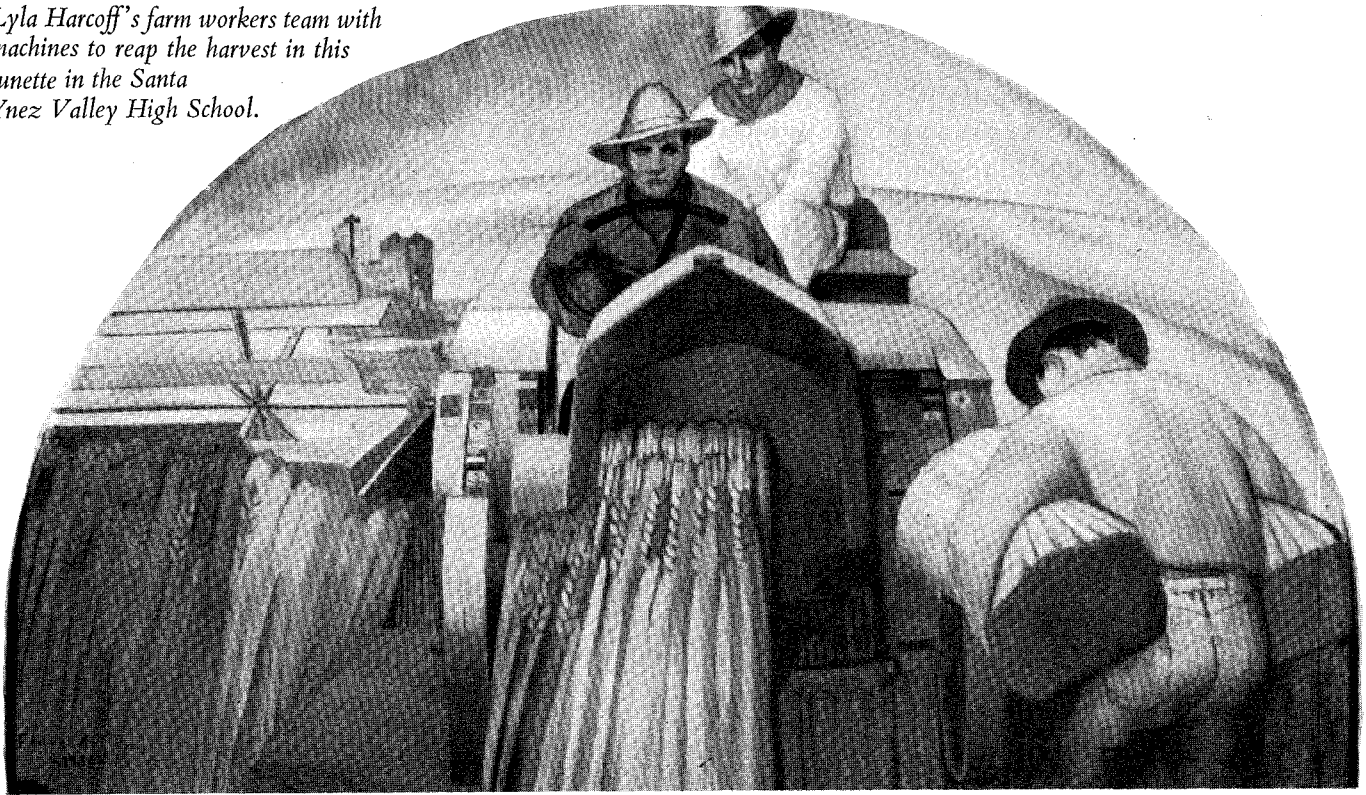
The artists' Anglo pioneers, on the other hand, may have had less fun than the Californios, but their hard work in the gold fields and on the land was shown as responsible for establishing a permanent Yankee culture in the state. The hardworking Anglo was most often depicted as a farmer because the pioneer farmer was akin to the mythical Jeffersonian yeoman who lived a pure life close to the soil and to God.⁶⁷ Although California had very few small family farms, the image of the family

farmer bringing prosperity through the honest sweat of his brow was so potent that it appeared in countless art works in both urban and rural areas.⁶⁸

A mural painted by Bruce Ariss for Monterey High School revealed the full range of California farm images. In an interesting inversion of the eastern seaboard experience, a white priest teaches the Indians how to plant corn, which they make into tortillas. Behind the Indians a Californio couple harvests corn and grapes before a tile-roofed barn. To the right of an allegorical figure representing fruitfulness, an Anglo couple loads vegetables into their truck in front of a wooden barn. In a rare injection of historical reality, a dark-skinned artichoke picker completes the mural.⁶⁹

By the time of the New Deal, most of California's land was controlled by giant corporate farms using large numbers of agricultural laborers—Carey McWilliams' "factories in the field"⁷⁰—but New Deal artists chose to ignore the unhappy realities captured in the photographs of the Farm Security Administration and focus on the corporate farms as efficient work places offering employment.⁷¹ In Ventura and Vacaville, in San Diego and

Lyla Harcoff's farm workers team with machines to reap the harvest in this lunette in the Santa Ynez Valley High School.



Far healthier and stronger than farmworkers captured in photographs from this period, Lew Keller's grape pickers in the St. Helena Post Office nevertheless seem to be working more strenuously than most agricultural workers shown in New Deal murals.

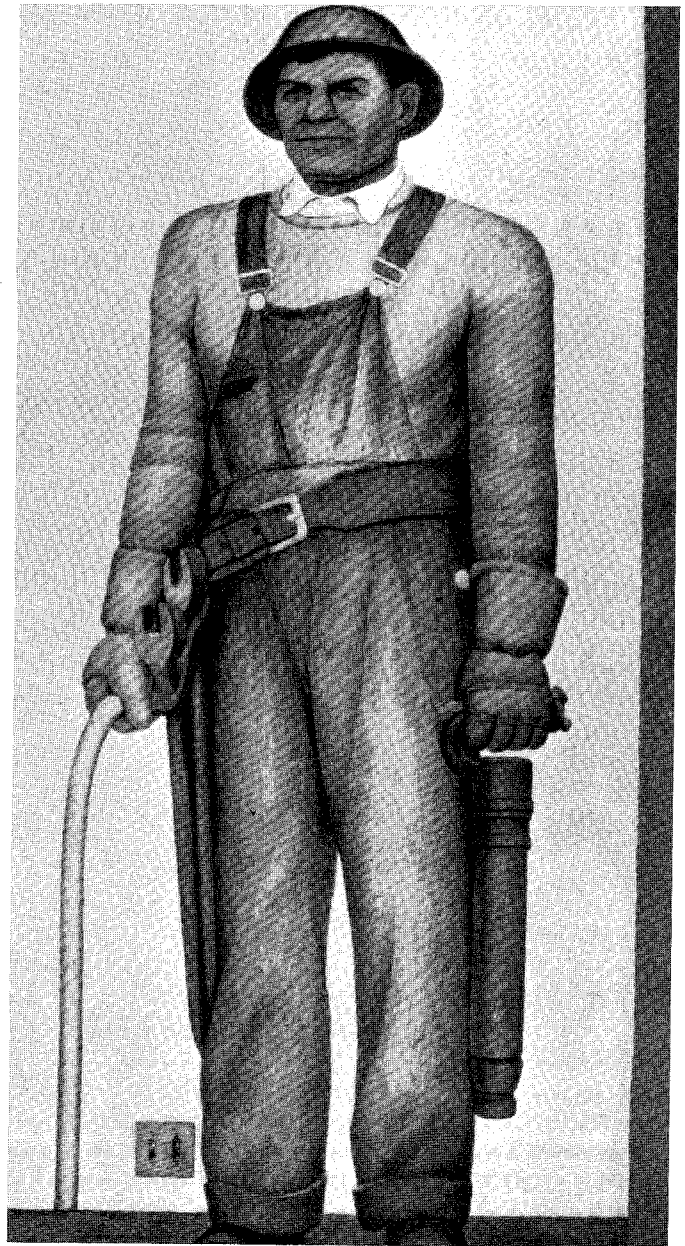
One of the series of portraits by radical artist Clifford Wight in Coit Tower, Steel Worker breathes strength, confidence, and responsibility.

San Francisco, the muralists' healthy, well-fed workers routinely reap the bounty of the land.⁷² Maxine Albro's Coit Tower flower picker could hardly be happier as she harvests calla lilies while dressed in a pearl necklace and lace-trimmed dress.⁷³ Only Lew Keller's grape pickers in the St. Helena Post Office and Henrietta Shore's field hands in Santa Cruz look as though they might be unhappy with their jobs.⁷⁴

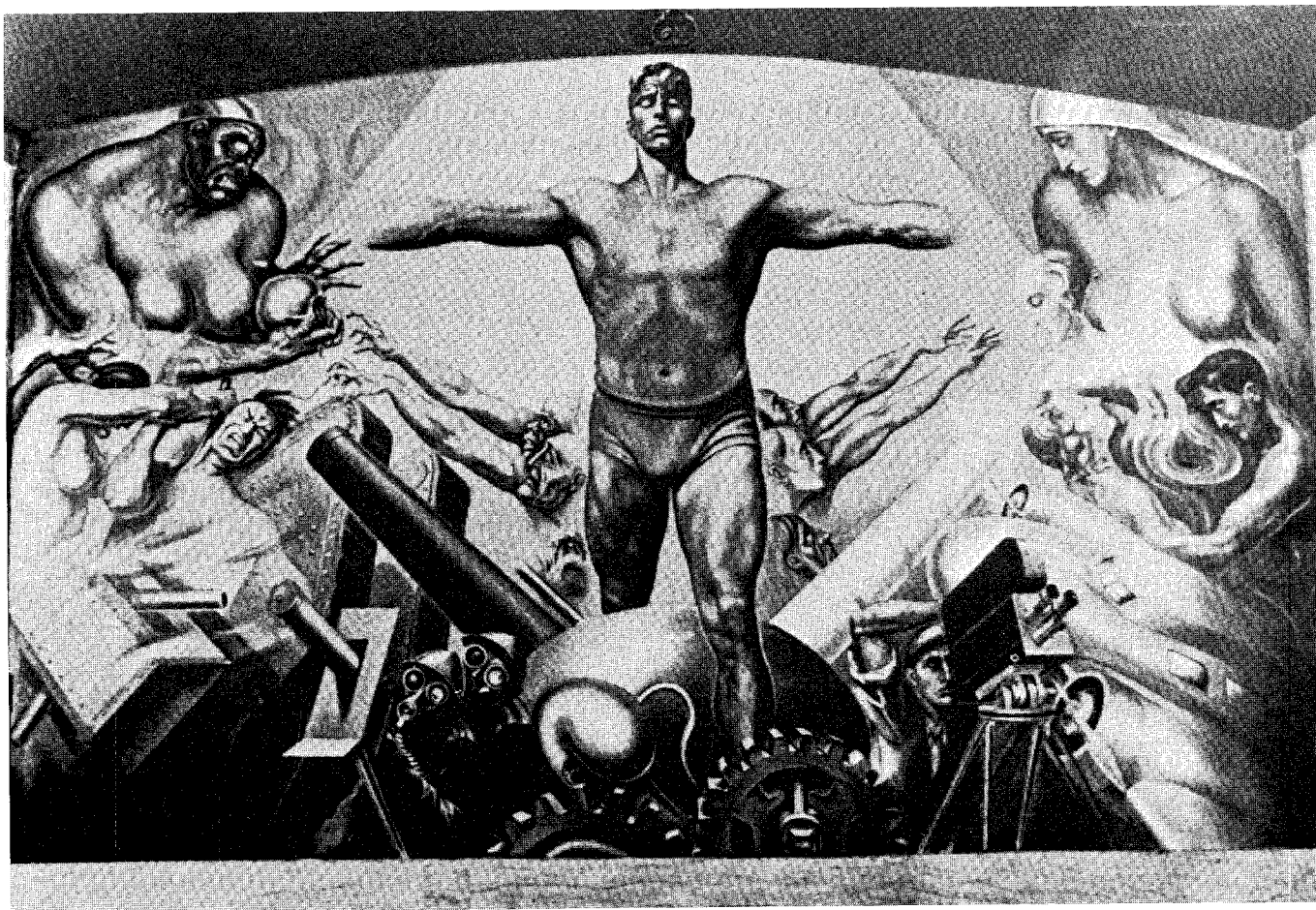
The peculiarly benign images of farm laborers, the state's poorest workers, reflected the artists' basic commitment to private employment. So did their industrial workers. Whether packing cheese, meat, or fruit, factory workers were depicted as sharing in the same bountiful economy. In fact the artists seemed less interested in the workers *per se* than in the thriving industrial system which combined men and machines. Neither dominated the New Deal industrial murals; the two worked together harmoniously to produce wealth. Workers were routinely shown as an anonymous but unexploited part of the fundamental economic strength of the American system, and Clifford Wight's gently smiling steelworker on the walls of Coit Tower epitomizes the apparent contentment of the vast majority of blue collar workers who people California's murals.⁷⁵

Artists rarely painted white collar employees and professionals—although the artists themselves were part of white collar work projects. They chose instead to focus their attention on the “common people.” Predictably, the artists' occasional scientists, doctors, dentists, and lawyers combine with a few teachers and surveyors, even bankers and stockbrokers, to work for, not against, the interests of the masses. Only the radical artists' murals in Coit Tower, and the almost invisible downward line on the “Stock Averages” chart in George Harris' mural “Banking and Law” in the same building, imply anything but the most positive assessment of both business and management.⁷⁶

The democratic cultural nationalism of the New Deal outlook shared by the administrators, artists, and public



precluded most conflicts over mural subjects and style. Yet artists could not always be sure that their vision of the American scene would be acceptable to federal officials and local popular taste. Before Joseph Danysh became one of the most important administrators of the FAP in the West, he addressed himself to the question of conflicting expectations: “All I had to do,” he wrote, “was to find myself a wall and paint the American scene. I was tempted to do some slums, but was afraid they'd be too American for them; I thought of a design with machines, but, after all, America has no monopoly on the machine; I thought of a social satire, but then the



inmates of the building might object; and, as for the rest of it—workmen, tools, cityscapes, farmers, subways—those had all been done to death.”⁷⁷

The limitations which Danysh raised in 1934 were actually embraced by New Deal artists during the heyday of the projects. How else, they questioned, could they produce art of maximum usefulness both to the state and to the people? Certainly there were limitations, observed San Francisco artist Lucien Labaudt, but Michelangelo, Fra Angelico, and de la Francesca had also worked under limitations. “Limitation forces one to think and therefore to create,” he reflected. “If we understand our role as Government workers, our duty is to serve the Government. By conforming ourselves to the program, our contributions in public buildings must be understood by the people at large.”⁷⁸

The only serious dispute that arose between a muralist and his local patrons in Southern California instructively defines the artistic limits which most New Deal artists readily accepted. In 1934, the adult students of the Frank

Wiggins Trade School in Los Angeles raised \$700 to commission a mural by New York artist Leo Katz who was spending two years on the West Coast. The students liked the finished work, but the Los Angeles School Board did not.⁷⁹

Although Katz painted three panels, it was only the central section, “Youth Arisen,” that provoked the board. The painting showed a blind youth, modestly clad in a bathing suit, striding forward with outstretched arms. At his feet were the implements of science and industry. Rising from the tools at his right were the misuses of technology and at his left the benefits. Each group was topped by a bare-breasted woman, one representing compassionate motherhood and the other, snarling and clutching a skull which dripped coins, personifying greed. Below, a woman surrounded by the tools of war stabbed a man in the neck. Balancing them were a pair of lovers and the instruments of learning and consumer technology.

School board members pronounced the mural

*The bare-breasted women and violence of
Leo Katz' mural at Los Angeles' Frank
Wiggins Trade School upset so many
people that the mural was removed
from the wall.*

"ghastly," "horrible," and "grotesque," and apparently objected to the female nudity. (Katz repeatedly vowed he would never put his figures—or at least his female figures—in "BVDs.") Because Katz refused to modify the central panel in any way, the school board removed it from the wall in 1935, and the two flanking panels followed four years later.⁸⁰

Katz claimed to be no radical, and he praised the New Deal for offering America "the grandest opportunity ever given in the history of the world to enjoy an age of construction through art."⁸¹ His mural was intended as a constructive statement against violence and greed, he said, and it was the kind of art demanded by the young generation which asked that "the artist not to be flattering but to tell life as it is."⁸² But Katz ran afoul of the older generations' opposition to scenes of sex and violence. Like the Coit Tower radicals who had offended the public's values, Katz had offended its sensibility, and he paid just as dearly for his boldness.

The Katz incident illustrates the occasional problem encountered by artists even when they had artistic carte blanche by Washington.⁸³ Administrators and artists working in the field needed to be sensitive to local taste, both because they wanted to speak to the local people and because they needed local support for their projects. The Section and TRAP decorated federally owned buildings and were thereby insulated from public reaction, but FAP, like the PWAP, worked in local public buildings. Not only did the people who controlled these buildings provide the wall space to the artists, but they also paid the cost of the artists' materials. (The FAP covered only the artists' wages.) Thus, FAP artists felt pressure to share the values of their patrons—the local citizens.

FAP administrator Joseph Danysh remembers that most communities wanted scenes of "pioneers trudging across the plains. And so we gave them pictures of pioneers."⁸⁴ But as long as they were allowed sufficient freedom to interpret the images, most artists on the

federal projects were more than willing to paint murals that bolstered local pride.⁸⁵ According to Glen Wessels, who headed the FAP in Northern California, the purpose of project art was "to catch whatever spirit of progress there was in the community and celebrate that. In other words, to take the optimistic side and celebrate it with a monumental work of art." Wessels reflected further: "You could criticize the United States, of course. There were a lot of mistakes being made; but, nevertheless, there were some good things, and those were the things that made the best subject matter for monumental art."⁸⁶

While FAP artists were tied to local patrons, men and women who painted for the Section of Painting and Sculpture had to keep in mind the kind of art favored by the Treasury Department. All Section artworks had to meet the standards of a panel of artistic judges in Washington, and artists quickly learned that if they wanted more commissions they would have to "paint Section."⁸⁷ As with FAP murals, local taste also had to be considered, and if the postmaster or community complained loudly enough, Washington would even demand changes in a design it had previously approved. Arizona artist Lew Davis, for example, designed a mural for the post office at Los Banos, California, that included a group of mounted Indians. Local historians objected that Los Banos had no mounted Indians, so Davis obligingly transformed them into vaqueros.⁸⁸

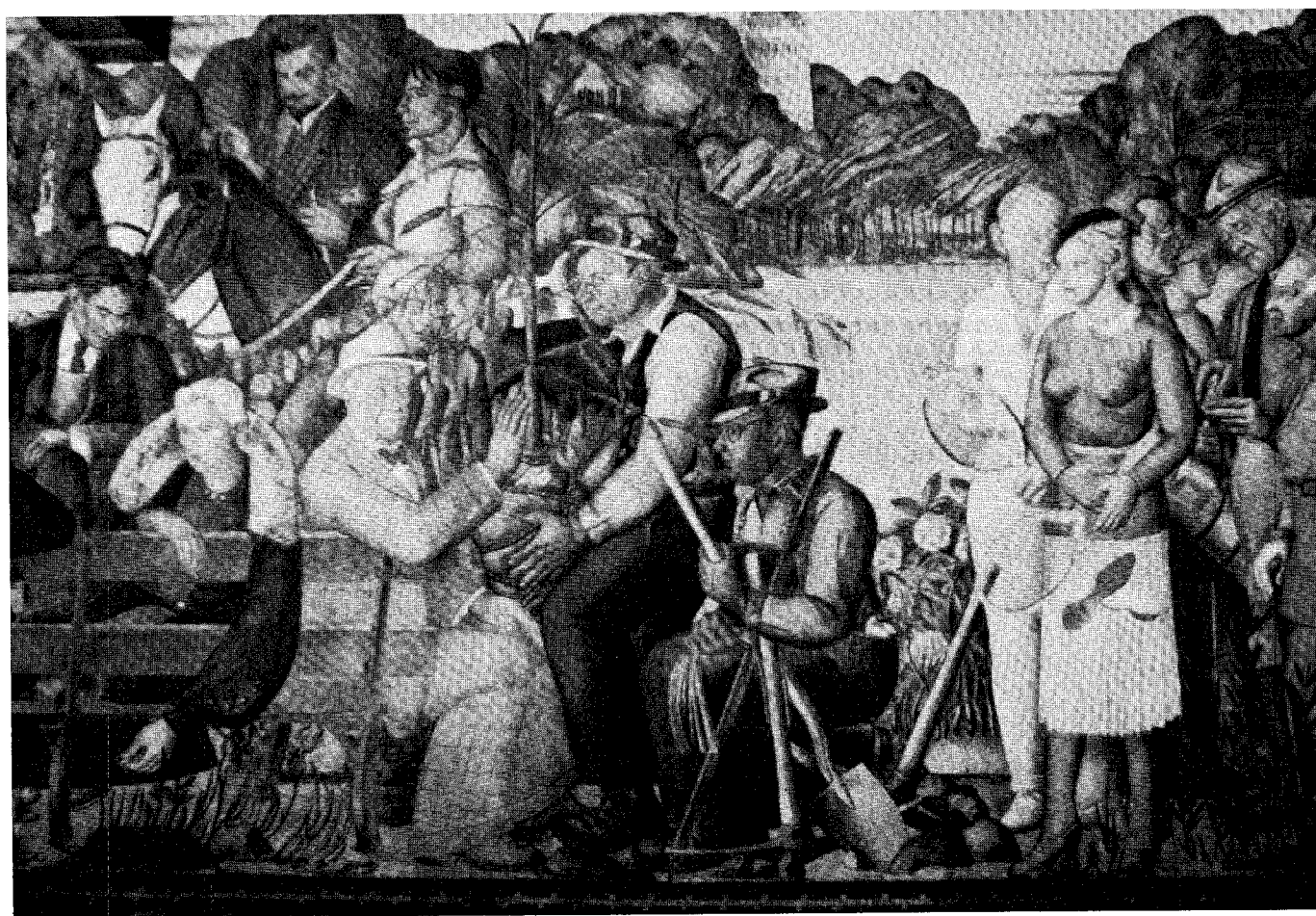
It is natural but incorrect to assume that radical artists felt restricted by government supervision. Administrators of both the FAP and Treasury Department projects were New Dealers who looked kindly upon socially relevant American Scene imagery so long as it did not contain explicitly radical symbolism. The New Deal, after all, was a reform program directed in part to meet-

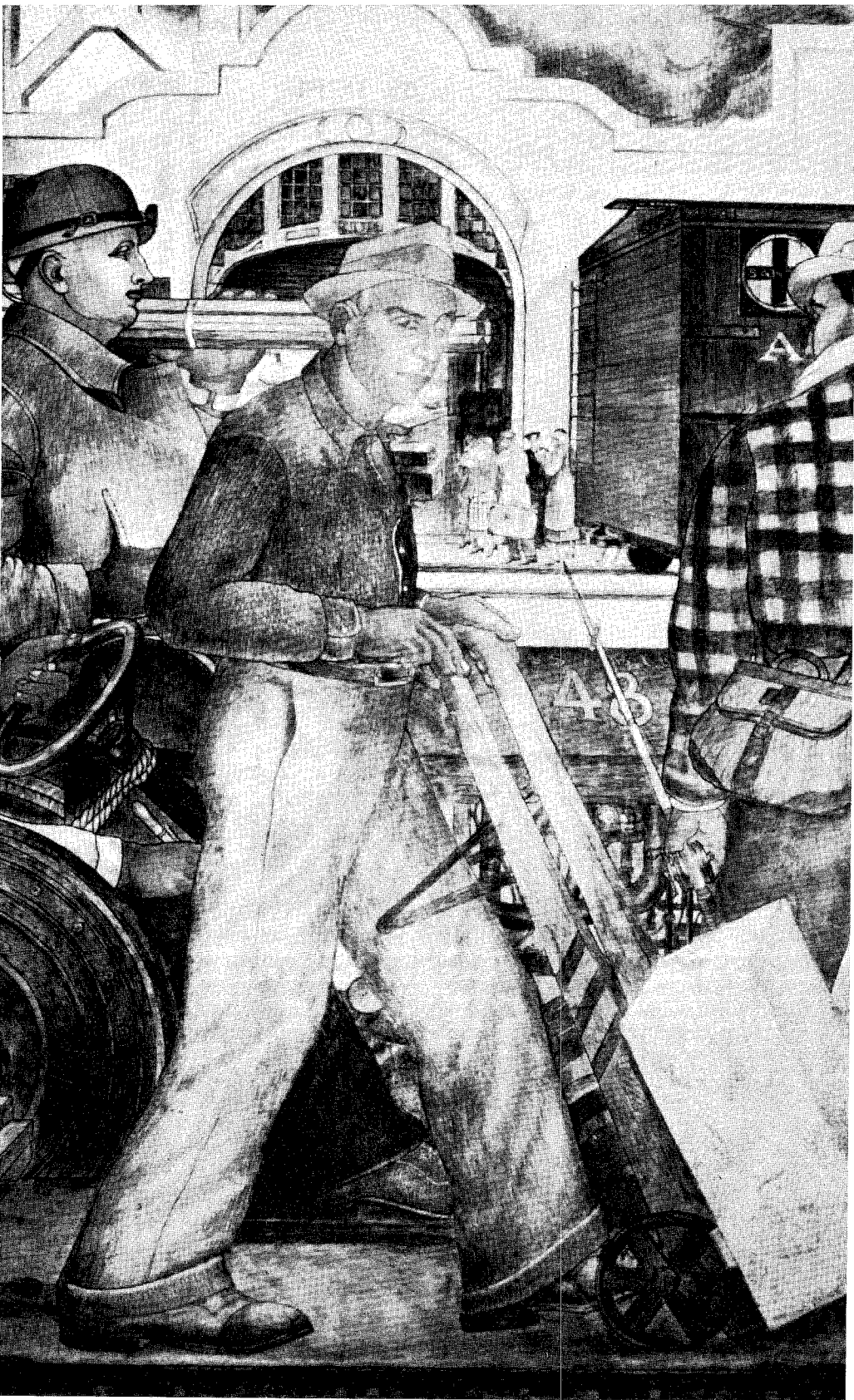
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Two cowboy-costumed children play at the marina in Lucien Labaudt's San Francisco Beach Chalet mural. Covering the four walls of this huge room, the mural ignores the economic depression except for a tiny WPA project sign buried in the background of one of the scenes.

Lucien Labaudt's fresco in the San Francisco Beach Chalet includes portraits of a number of San Francisco artists and city and art project officials. Sculptor Benny Bufano rides the dark horse, while the man on the white horse is Joseph Danysh, a California Federal Art Project official and thus the artist's patron.





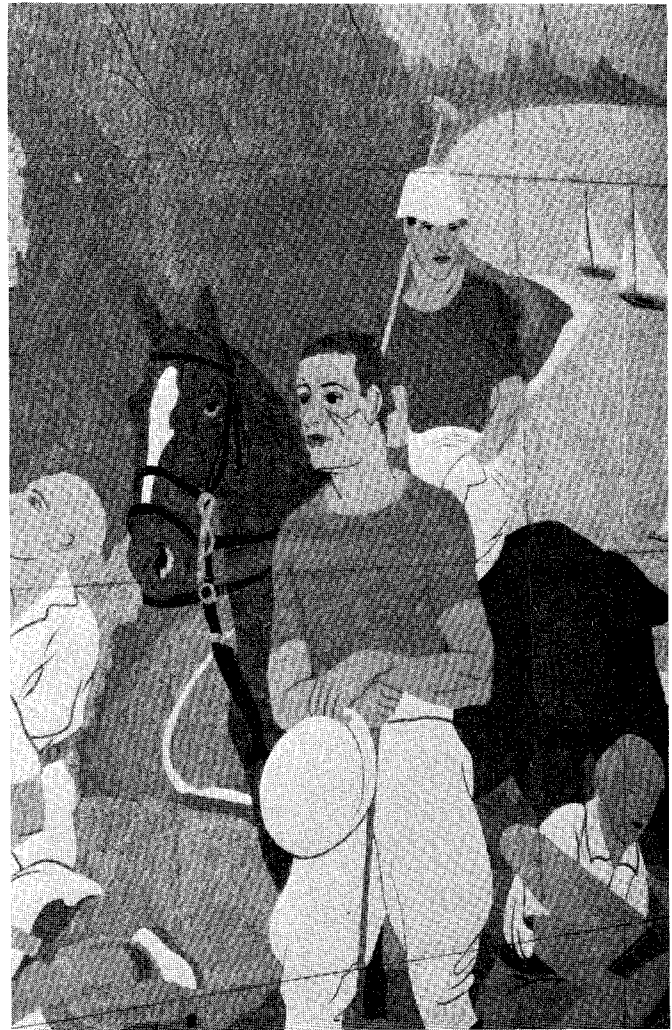
This embarcadero dock worker in Lucien Labaudi's Beach Chalet mural is traditionally identified as Harry Bridges, head of the San Francisco longshore union. No hard evidence confirms the model's identity.

Stanton Macdonald-Wright's glamorous recreation theme in the Santa Monica City Hall was executed in petrachrome. A form of opus sectile which Macdonald-Wright invented, petrachrome murals were made up of puzzle-piece sections of colored concrete.

ing the needs of the impoverished working class. Even politically radical artists found their administrators sympathetic, and in California they seem to have easily made their peace with the iconographic expectations of the various projects.

The centralized selection process used by the Section of Painting and Sculpture may have meant that artists learned to "paint Section," but it did not mean that Section painting was necessarily devoid of social comment. Southern California muralist Hugo Ballin's experience with the Section illustrates its apparent eagerness to commission art that was ideologically compatible with New Deal values.⁸⁹ An outspoken opponent of both modernism and social realism, Ballin had had seven design proposals rejected by the Section. He attributed his poor success record to the lack of critical social commentary in his nineteenth-century academic images. Finally the frustrated Ballin decided to give the "brain trusters" what he thought they wanted. He submitted a color sketch of drunken miners in a bar shooting people and mingling with "frowsy girls." But what Ballin believed would convince Washington to accept this painting was the "dreamlike satire of fat capitalists" appearing in one corner. "Below this scene of callous wealth," Ballin recalled, a "smug cat was enthroned on a cushion in the rich man's dining room while a poor Negro begs in vain for a crumb."⁹⁰ Although the design did not win the competition for which it was submitted, the jury was sufficiently impressed to offer Ballin \$640 to paint the mural at the post office in Englewood, California. Ballin declined the honor, exposed his hoax, and announced he would paint the picture where it belonged—in a saloon.

The Ballin design, the Kassler murals in the Beverly Hills Post Office, and the Howard images in Coit Tower demonstrate that it was possible to paint social commentary without meeting resistance from either the federal bureaucracy or local patrons. The Katz and Refregier disputes indicate that, if anything, the govern-



ment administrators were more liberal than their local patrons. Because the federal government *was* the local patron for all Section and TRAP murals, the lack of critical social commentary in New Deal murals cannot be laid at the feet of school boards and city councils. In short, the overwhelming reason for the benign quality of New Deal art in California was the artists' voluntary acceptance of the American Scene/New Deal philosophy.

California artists earnestly believed that their art should be inspirational, and they painted the world not as it was but as they wished it to be. Their heavy emphasis on themes of work reflected their belief that hard labor would again bring a happy, healthy, and even wealthy life. Accordingly, in a Coit Tower mural by Jane Berlandina, well-dressed couples dance to the music of a ukelele and grand piano at an elegant house party. On the tower's stairwells, beautifully turned-out San Franciscans parade up and down Powell Street in murals

by Lucian Labaudt. In Labaudt's San Francisco Beach Chalet scenes, equestrians, tennis players, and the Saint Francis Yacht Club inhabit the landscape. If, as reputed, a Beach Chalet waterfront scene includes a portrait of Labaudt's friend, labor organizer Harry Bridges, it is a Bridges peacefully wheeling a hand-truck, not leading the violent waterfront strike of 1934.⁹¹ In San Diego other artists painted prosperous equestrians and hunters, and in Santa Monica even polo players made an appearance.⁹²

The message carried by New Deal art is clear—hard work will triumph over economic depression. By painting murals celebrating this American ideal, the artists were themselves working in a socially useful way, and the system was rewarding their hard work by paying them money for painting pictures in the middle of the worst economic catastrophe in the country's history.

The mural on page 114 is courtesy Edith Hamlin; the photo on page 107 and the murals on pages 98-99 and 106 are courtesy the San Francisco Public Library's History Room, Civic Center. The other murals were photographed by Don Beatty and are in the collection of the de Saisset Gallery, University of Santa Clara.

Notes

1. Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History* (New York: The Universal Library, Grosset and Dunlap, 1948), p. 57.
2. William W. Bremer, "Along the 'American Way': The New Deal Work Relief Program for the Unemployed," *The Journal of American History*, December, 1975, p. 637.
3. Alfred Neumeyer, "Around the Galleries," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 6, 1938, p. 32. Although Neumeyer did not mention specific murals, he may have been referring to Coit Tower scenes: Gordon Langdon's "California Industrial Scene," Ralph Stackpole's "Industries of California," George Harris' "Banking and Law," frescoes, Coit Tower, San Francisco, Public Works of Art Project (PWAP), 1934.
4. Barbara Rose, *American Art Since 1900* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1967), p. 113.
5. Matthew Baigell, *The American Scene: American Painting of the 1930s* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), pp. 18-19.
6. Richard D. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 22-23.
7. *Report of the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to Federal Emergency Relief Administrator—Public Works of Art Project: Dec. 8, 1933 to June 30, 1934* (Washington, D.C., 1934), p. 2.
8. Baigell, *The American Scene*, 55.
9. *Ibid.*, 59.
10. *Ibid.*, 58-61; Marlene Park and Gerald E. Markowitz, *New Deal for Art: The Government Art Projects of the 1930s with Examples from New York City and State* (Hamilton, N.Y.: Gallery Association of New York State, 1977), pp. 29-31.
11. Joseph A. Danysh, interview, Carmel, California, April 24, 1975. See also Gerald M. Monroe, "The '30s: Art, Ideology and the WPA," *Art in America*, November-December, 1975, p. 64; Gerald M. Monroe, "The Artists Union of New York," *Art Journal*, Fall, 1972, pp. 717-20.
12. "San Francisco Art Notes," *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 1, 1934, n.p., clipping in Ferdinand Perret Research Library, Biographical Volumes (arranged alphabetically), National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Perret, Biography).
13. Stanton Macdonald-Wright, "Introduction," *San Diego Civic Center Fountain and Donal Hord, Sculptor* (n.p.: Federal Art Project of Southern California, Works Progress Administration, mimeographed, [c.1937]), National Collection of Fine Arts, Holger Cahill file, "Photographs by State: California," (hereafter cited as NCFA, Cahill file).
14. Reuben Kadish, interview, New York City, December 31, 1975.
15. For indications that traditional art was encouraged in easel painting as well, see Olin Dows to Belle Baranceanu, November 24, 1936, Archives of American Art, microfilm reel DC 16/484 (hereafter cited as AAA); William H. Clapp to Olin Dows, October 18, 1935, AAA, DC 16/627.
16. Jane DeHart Mathews, "Arts and the People: The New Deal Quest for a Cultural Democracy," *Journal of American History*, September, 1975, pp. 316-339. See also, Thomas C. Parker, "Introduction," *Frontiers of American Art* (San Francisco: De Young Museum, May, 1939), p. 9; Holger Cahill, "American Resources in the Arts," in Francis V. O'Connor, ed., *Art for the Millions* (Greenwich, Ct: New York Graphic Society, 1973), pp. 33-44.
17. Reprint from the *Los Angeles Times*, August 8, 1937, in *Federal Art Project, Press Clippings, WPA, August, 1937* (mimeographed), 2, AAA, LA 1/730.
18. Joseph A. Danysh, "Trends in Modern Art," *California Arts and Architecture*, August, 1938, p. 7.
19. Stanton Macdonald-Wright, *Mosaic and Its Allied Techniques* ([Los Angeles], F.A.P., District 11, mimeographed, [c.1936]), 1, AAA, LA 4/485. See also, Stanton Macdonald-Wright,

- "Sculpture in Southern California," in O'Connor, *Art for the Millions*, 100.
20. Lincoln Kirstein, "Mural Painting," *Murals by American Painters and Photographers* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, May, 1932), p. 9, AAA, LS 2/96.
 21. Ibid.
 22. Ibid., 10.
 23. Bertram D. Wolfe, *The Fabulous Life of Diego Rivera* (New York: Stein and Day, 1963), pp. 280-291; Works Progress Administration, *California Art Research* (San Francisco: WPA, mimeographed, 1937), vol. XX, part 2, Maxine Albrow; Bernard Zakheim, interview, Sebastopol, California, February 15, 1975.
 24. Lorster Feitelson and Helen Lundeberg, interview, Los Angeles, March 14, 1975.
 25. Edward Biberman, interview, Hollywood, April 15, 1975.
 26. Arnautoff apparently meant to paint "The New Masses" since *The Masses* had been defunct since World War I.
 27. Victor Arnautoff, "Metropolitan Life," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934. Art cited hereinafter without illustration source was photographed on location for author under an National Endowment for the Humanities museum grant.
 28. Ibid.
 29. John Langley Howard, "California Industrial Scenes," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934.
 30. Bernard Zakheim, "Library," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934; Masha Zakheim Jewett, "The Sacred Shields of Coit Tower: A History of the Coit Tower and its Art," (unpublished ms., San Francisco, 1975).
 31. Evelyn Seeley, "A Frescoed Tower Clangs Shut Amid Gasps," *The Literary Digest*, August 25, 1934, p. 24; McKinzie, *New Deal for Artists*, 24-27; Belisario R. Contreras, "The New Deal Treasury Art Programs and the American Artist: 1933 to 1943" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The American University, 1967), pp. 60-64.
 32. Anton Refregier, "History of San Francisco," casein, Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section of Painting and Sculpture, Treasury Department (Section), 1947-1948.
 33. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Public Works, Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, *Rincon Annex Murals, San Francisco*, Hearings, 83 Congress, 1 sess., May 1, 1953, 36; Gladys M. Kunkel, "The Mural Paintings by Anton Refregier in the Rincon Annex of the San Francisco Post Office, San Francisco, California" (unpublished master's thesis, Arizona State University, 1969), p. 66.
 34. Alfred Haworth Jones, "The Search for a Usable Past in the New Deal Era," *The American Quarterly*, December, 1971, pp. 710-724.
 35. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists*, 5-12; Contreras, "The New Deal Treasury Art Programs," 84-89; William F. McDonald, *Federal Relief Administration and the Arts: The Origins and Administration History of the Arts Projects of the Works Progress Administration* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969), pp. 357-368; Francis V. O'Connor, *Federal Support for the Visual Arts: The New Deal and Now* (Greenwich, Ct.: New York Graphic Society, 1971), pp. 17-21.
 36. Contreras, "The New Deal Treasury Art Programs," 15, 154.
 37. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists*, 85.
 38. Steven M. Gelber and Lydia Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California* (Santa Clara: de Saisset Art Gallery and Museum, University of Santa Clara, 1976), pp. 23-24, 110-117.
 39. McKinzie, *The New Deal for Artists*, 124.
 40. Gelber and Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California*, 23-24.
 41. Herman Volz, interview, San Jose, California, February 28, 1975.
 42. San Francisco Museum of Art, "Federal Works Agency, Work Projects Administration, Prints; To: The Oakland Museum," March 5, 1965; Works Progress Administration, Federal Art Program, "Allocation Control Cards [prints]," box in National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C.
 43. Gelber and Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California*, 117.
 44. Interviews with a score of California artists who worked on New Deal projects failed to turn up anyone who admitted to altering his painting style for the projects.
 45. Charles Kassler, II, "Construction—PWA," fresco, Beverly Hills Post Office, Treasury Relief Art Program (TRAP), 1936.
 46. Charles Kassler to Cecil Jones, October 15, 1937, copy in Artists' Biographical Information file, Office of Fine Arts and Historic Preservation, Government Services Administration, Washington, D.C.
 47. Charles Kassler to Olin Dows, December 17, 1935, AAA, DC 16/484-486.
 48. Olin Dows to Charles Kassler, January 29, 1936, AAA, DC 16/574.
 49. Charles Kassler to Olin Dows, February 3, 1936, AAA, DC 16/541.
 50. Kassler to Jones, October 15, 1937.
 51. Biberman, interview.
 52. Feitelson and Lundeberg, interview.
 53. Belle Baranceanu, interview, San Diego, March 16, 1975; Carlos Dyer to Olin Dows, September 26, 1936, AAA, DC 17/1098-1101.
 54. Cecil H. Jones, memorandum to Bruce, Watson, et al., March 31, 1937, AAA, DC 16/179.
 55. Bernard Reufberg to Cecil Jones, September 10, 1936, AAA, DC 18/69. Artists were so pleased to find any work at all that they usually worked full-time for part-time pay. See Cecil H. Jones to Mr. Dean, January 15, 1937, AAA, DC 17/359.
 56. Richard and Ann O'Hanlon, interview, Mill Valley, California, February 19, 1975.
 57. Jacques Schnier, interview, Lafayette, California, February 27, 1975.

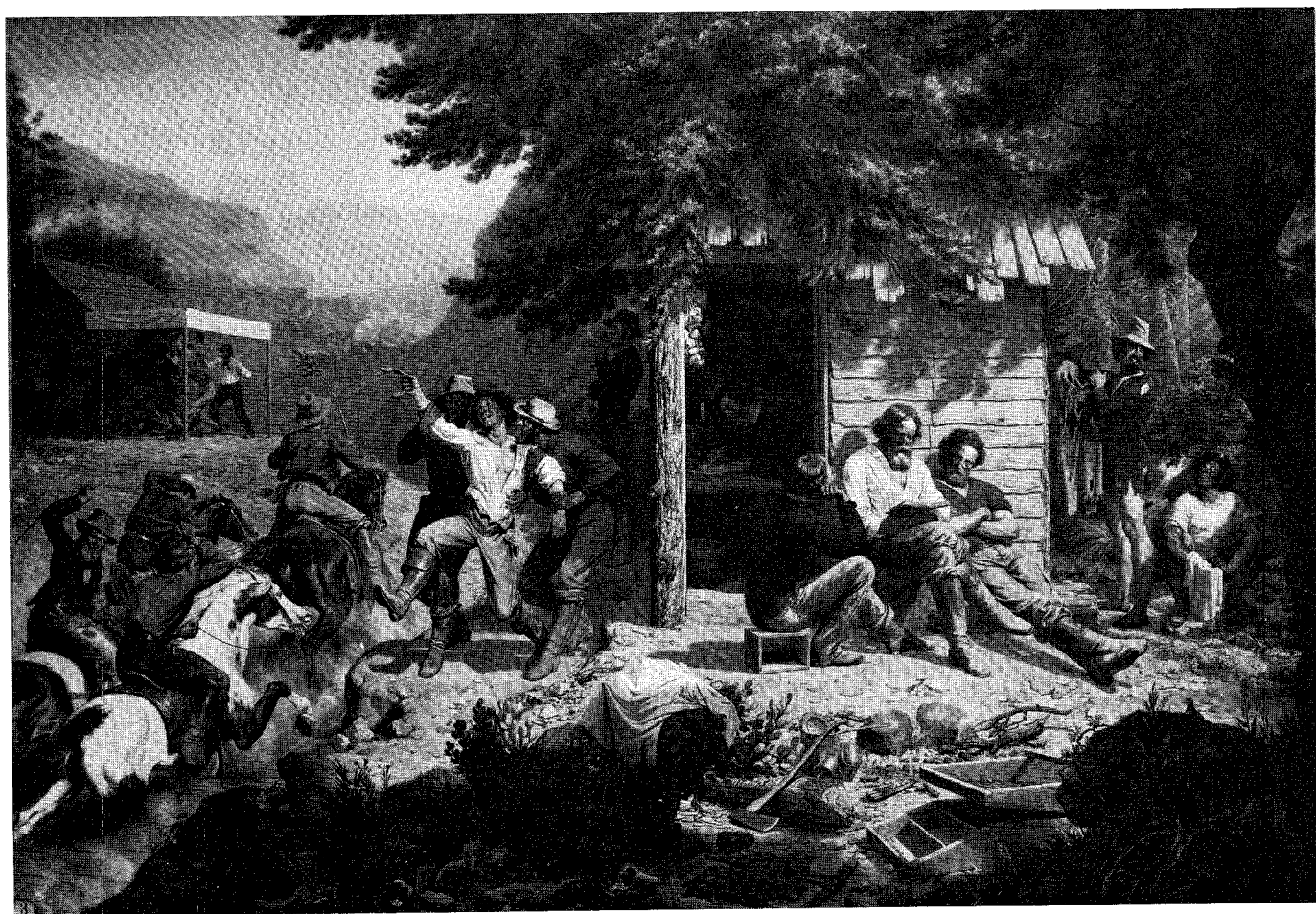
58. Henri De Kruif, "The New Ideal," *The Art Digest*, January 15, 1934, n.p., clipping in Ferdinand Perret Research Library, "Art History, U.S.A.," loose leaf volumes arranged chronologically, National Collection of Fine Arts, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as Perret, History). The emphasis on work as an American value is especially obvious in the four panels of Paul Julian, "History of Upland," petrachrome, Upland Elementary School, Upland, Federal Art Program (FAP), n.d., U.S. National Archives, Record Group 69, "Photographs of Federal Art Projects, 1936-1943," "Murals—California to Washington," 69-AS, Box 13.
59. Anonymous, "Eagle," cast metal, cast concrete, Burlingame Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," cast concrete, San Diego County Office Building, [FAP?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," cast metal, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, n.d.; Anonymous "Eagle," cast metal Martinez Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," gilded cast stone, Napa Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Anonymous, "Eagle," two in cast metal, Terminal Annex Post Office, Los Angeles, Section, c. 1941; Henry Lion, "Eagle," two in cast metal, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, 1938; Stuart Holmes, "Eagle," carved wood, Bell Post Office, TRAP, 1937; Stuart Holmes, "Eagle," carved wood, Claremont Post Office [TRAP?], 1936.
60. Archibald Garner, "The Law," cast stone, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, 1941; James Hansen, "The Young Lincoln," cast stone, Los Angeles Federal Building, Section, 1941; Victor Arnautoff, "Life of Washington," fresco, George Washington High School, San Francisco, FAP, 1935. As a rule, allegorical and historical figures were much more common in sculpture than in painting. See Jo Mora, "Justice," cast stone, Monterey County Court House, Salinas, [FAP?], n.d.; Arnold Foerster, "Marquis de Lafayette," cast stone, Lafayette Park, Los Angeles, [FAP?], n.d.; Frederick Olmsted, "Edison," tufa, San Francisco City College, FAP, 1941; John Palo-Kangas, "Junípero Serra," concrete, Town Square, Ventura, FAP, 1936; Harold Swartz, "John Marshall," cast metal, John Marshall High School, Hollywood, PWAP, 1934; Lorser Feitelson, "Daniel Boone," fresco, Hooper Avenue School, Los Angeles, FAP, n.d., NCFA, Cahill File. Historical heroes were much more popular for easel painting and small portable sculpture. See Olin Dows to Walter Heil, February 11, 1936, AAA, DC 16/957; Henry LaFarge to David Slivka, January 28, 1937, *Ibid.*, 342-343.
61. This is not to say that artists never modeled their portraits after real people. See for example, Robert Hagan, "The Walls They Left Behind," *San Francisco Magazine*, April, 1964, p. 22; Masha Zakheim Jewett, "Scenes From Another Time," *California Living*, *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, September 12, 1976, p. 26.
62. Jones, *The American Quarterly*, 718-719.
63. Alfred Frankenstein, "Arnautoff Completes 1600 Square Feet of Washington Frescoes," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, 1936, n.p., clipping in Perret, Biography; Victor Arnautoff, "Life of Washington," fresco, George Washington High School, San Francisco, FAP, 1935.
64. Victor Arnautoff, "Peace Time Activities of the Army," fresco, Presidio Chapel, San Francisco, SERA, 1935; Anton Refregier, "History of San Francisco," Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section, 1947-1948; Marion Simpson, "Exploration and Settling of California," marble opus sectile, Alameda County Court House, Oakland, FAP, 1937; Stanton Macdonald-Wright, "Exploration of California," petrachrome, Santa Monica City Hall, FAP, n.d.; Jo Mora, "California History," cast stone Monterey County Court House, Salinas, FAP, d.n.; Belle Baranceanu, "Indians," Roosevelt Jr. High School, Los Angeles, FAP, 1938; Grace Clements and Helen Lundeborg, "History of California," Venice High School, Venice, FAP, 1941; Lyla M. Harcoff, "Agricultural Scenes," oil on canvas, Santa Ynez High School, Santa Ynez, FAP, 1936; Vladimir Nemkoff, "Early California," carved wood, Hollister Post Office, [Section?], 1936; Edith Hamlin, "Mission Dolores," fresco, Mission High School, San Francisco, FAP, 1937, *California Arts and Architecture*, June, 1940, p. 5; Norman Chamberlain, "History of California," Huntington Park Post Office, TRAP, 1937, U.S. National Archives, Record Group 121, Public Building Service, "Photographs of Murals in United States Post Offices, California," loose leaf, 2 vols. (hereafter cited as R.G. 121, "Photographs of Murals"); A. F. Brasz, "Indian Agriculture," Redlands City Hall, Redlands, FAP, n.d., U.S. Library of Congress, Division of Prints and Photographs, Lot 3133F, no. 1273-A (hereafter cited as Library of Congress); Althea Ulber, "Youth and Democracy," David Starr Jordan High School, Los Angeles, [FAP?], n.d., *ibid.*, no number.
65. Refregier, "History of San Francisco," fresco, Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section, 1947-1948; Primo Caredio, "Indian," mosaic, Beach Chalet, San Francisco, FAP, 1937; Buckley MacGurrian, "Soldier and Indian," El Monte High School, El Monte, FAP, n.d., NCFA, Cahill file.
66. Lyla M. Harcoff, "Vaquero," oil on canvas, Santa Ynez Valley High School, Santa Ynez, FAP, 1936; Stanton Macdonald-Wright, "Spanish California," mosaic, Thomas Edison Jr. High School, Los Angeles, FAP, 1937; Grace Clements and Helen Lundeborg, "History of California," Venice High School, Venice, FAP, 1941; Moira Wallace, "Fiesta," oil on canvas, Monterey Union High School, Monterey, FAP, 1937; Thomas Laman, "Life in Early California," egg tempera, San Mateo Post Office, TRAP, 1937; Donal Hord, "Guardian of the Water," diorite and mosaic, County Administration Building, San Diego, FAP, 1939; Suzanne Scheuer, "Incidents in California History," tempera and oil on canvas, Berkeley Post Office,

- TRAP, 1937; Marion Simpson, "Exploration and Settling of California," marble opus sectile, Alameda County Court House, Oakland, FAP, 1936-1937; Milford Zornes, "California Landscape," Claremont Post Office, TRAP, 1937, U.S. National Archives, Record Group 121, "TRAP Prints"; James Redmond, "Early California," Compton Post Office, TRAP, 1936, *ibid.*; Althea Ulber, "Fiesta Time," David Starr Jordan High School, Los Angeles, [FAP?], n.d., Library of Congress, Lot 3137F, no number; Virgil Zenor, "Fiesta," oil on canvas, Leuzinger High School, Lawndale, FAP, 1937, *ibid.*, no. 212; Frank K. Bowers and Arthur W. Prunier, "Spanish California Days," fresco, Ruth Home School, El Monte, FAP, 1937, *ibid.*, no. 341C. Gordon Grant's mural "El Peysano," in the Alhambra Post Office, Section, 1938, is unique in the state of California because it shows colonial Mexican field workers, *ibid.*, Lot 3133F, no. B618 Pts.
67. Jo Mora, "California History," cast stone, Monterey County Court House, Salinas, FAP, n.d.; Anonymous, "Morman Monument," petrachrome, Presidio Park, San Diego, FAP, n.d.; Lulu H. Braghetta, "Wealth of Sutter County," colored wood bas relief, Yuba City Post Office, Section, 1942; William O. Atkinson, "Transportation of the Mail," cast stone bas relief, Santa Barbara Post Office, Section, 1937; Ray Boynton, "Animal Force," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934; Grace Clements and Helen Lundeborg, "History of California," Venice High School, Venice, FAP, 1941.
 68. Dorr Bothwell, "Whittier Homesteaders," mosaic, East Whittier Elementary School, East Whittier, FAP, 1939, *Los Angeles Times*, September 3, 1939, n.p., clipping in Perret, History; Benjamin Cunningham, "Resources of the Soil," egg tempera, Ukiah Post Office, Section, 1939, RG 121, "Photographs of Murals"; Norman Chamberlain, "Land of Irrigation," Selma Post Office, Section, 1938, *ibid.*; Jean Swigget, "mural sketch," n.p., [FAP?], n.d., NCFA, Cahill file; Grace Clements and Helen Lundeborg, "History of California," Venice High School, Venice, FAP, 1941, *ibid.*; Thomas Laman, "Land, Water, Mining and Forestry," Eureka Post Office, TRAP, 1936, RG 121, "TRAP Prints"; Milford Zornes, "California Landscape," Claremont Post Office, TRAP, 1937, *ibid.*
 69. Bruce Ariss, "Farm Scene," Monterey High School, Monterey, [FAP?], n.d.
 70. Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Santa Barbara: Peregrine Publishers, 1935, 1971).
 71. For FSA photographs, see Gelber and Modi Vitale, *New Deal Art: California*, pp. 34-52, 121-138; F. Jack Hurley, *Portrait of a Decade: Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1972); Roy Emerson Stryker and Nancy Wood, *In This Proud Land: America 1935-1943 As Seen in the FSA Photographs* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1973).
 72. Ray Boynton, "Agricultural Scenes," tempera on plywood, Modesto Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Lyla Harcoff, "Agricultural Scene," oil on canvas, Santa Ynez Valley High School, Santa Ynez, FAP, 1936; Gordon Grant, "Agriculture and Industries of Ventura," Ventura Post Office, Section, 1938; Emrich Nicholson, "Fruit Season in Vacaville," oil on Canvas, Vacaville Post Office, Section, 1939; Arthur Ames and Jean Goodwin, "San Diego Scenes," San Diego Civic Center, San Diego, FAP, 1938; Maxine Albro, "California Agriculture," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934; Moya del Pino, "Flower Farming and Vegetable Raising," oil on canvas, Redwood City Post Office, Section, 1937; Boris Deutsch, "Grape Pickers," tempera, Reedly Post Office, Section, 1941; August Gay, "Orange Picking," Monterey Union High School, Monterey, FAP, n.d.; David Swanson, "Harvest Time," carved walnut panel, Santa Ynez Valley High School, Santa Ynez, FAP, 1936; David Slivka, "Man with Lettuce," cast bas relief, Watsonville Post Office, TRAP, 1937, RG 121, "TRAP Prints"; Arnold Rubio, "Agricultural Workers," San Bernardino Post Office, TRAP, 1937, *ibid.*; Marguerite Zorach, "Farm Scenes," oil on canvas, Fresno Federal Building, Section, 1941, Library of Congress, Lot 3133F, no. 6068; A. F. Brasz, "Fruit Pickers," Redlands City Hall, Redlands, FAP, 1940, *ibid.*, no. 1273C; Paul Julian, "Fruit Pickers," Fullerton Post Office, Section, 1942, *ibid.*, no number. In this same vein, see George Samerjan, "Lettuce Workers," Calexico Post Office, Section, 1942, Library of Congress, Lot 3134F, no. 8986.
 73. Maxine Albro, "California Agriculture," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934.
 74. Lew Keller, "Grape Pickers," oil on canvas, St. Helena Post Office, Section, 1942; Henrietta Shore, "Santa Cruz Agriculture," oil on canvas, Santa Cruz Post Office, TRAP, 1936, RG 121, "Photographs of Murals."
 75. Ray Boynton, "Agricultural Scenes," tempera on plywood, Modesto Post Office, [Section?], n.d.; Ray Bertrand, "Meat Industry," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934; Ralph Stackpole, "Industries of California," *ibid.*; Edward Biberman, "The History of Venice," oil, wax emulsion on canvas, Venice Post Office, Section, 1941; Barse Miller, "People of Burbank," Burbank Post Office, Section, 1940; Clifford Wight, "Steelworker," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, PWAP, 1934; Victor Arnautoff, "South San Francisco in Past and Present," oil on canvas, South San Francisco Post Office, Section, 1942; Victor Arnautoff, "Richmond, Industrial City," oil on canvas, Richmond Post Office, Section, 1939; Donal Hord, "Road Workers," wood bas relief, Santa Monica High School, Santa Monica, FAP, n.d.; Gordon Langdon, "California Industrial Scene," fresco, Coit Tower, San Francisco, TRAP, 1934; George B. Post, "Lumbering, Agriculture and Mining," fresco,

- Sonora High School, Sonora, PWAP, 1934; Anton Refregier, "History of San Francisco," fresco, Rincon Annex Post Office, San Francisco, Section, 1947-1948; George Samerjan, "Industry, Home, Recreation," Maywood Post Office, Section, 1941, Library of Congress, Lot 3134F, no. 7458, and RG 121, "Photographs of Murals"; Thomas Laman, "Land, Water, Mining and Forestry," Eureka Post Office, TRAP, 1936, RG 121, "TRAP Prints"; Norman Chamberlain, "History of California," Huntington Park Post Office, TRAP, 1937, *ibid.*, and RG 121, "Photographs of Murals"; Benjamin Cunningham, "Resources of the Soil," egg tempera, Ukiah Post Office, Section, 1939, *ibid.*; Henrietta Shore, "Santa Cruz Industry," oil on canvas, Santa Cruz Post Office, TRAP, 1936, *ibid.*; Tyrone Comfort, "Kiln," Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, PWAP, 1934, NCFA, Cahill file; Arthur Ames, "Three Fishermen," mosaic, Newport Harbor Union High School, Newport Beach, FAP, 1937, *ibid.*; Jean Swigget, "Agriculture and Industry," sketch, n.p., [FAP?], n.d., *ibid.*
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 84. Joseph A. Danysh, interview, Carmel, California, April 24, 1975.
 85. Thomas Laman to Olin Dows, January 28, 1936, AAA, DC 17/620; Milford Zornes to Olin Dows, August 21, 1936, *ibid.*, 368; Ray Boynton to Olin Dows, September 15, 1936, *ibid.*, 888; Suzanne Scheuer to Olin Dows, December 12, 1935, AAA, DC 16/272; Sherry Peticolas to Henry LaFarge, August 8, 1936, AAA, DC 17/452.
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 89. For example, see Ballin's entry in the Beverly Hills Post Office Competition, U.S., National Archives, Record Group 121, Public Building Service, "Art Competition Entries, 1933-43 (prints)," Box 3, "Beverly Hills."
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“Matilda for Gods Sake Write”

WOMEN AND FAMILIES ON THE ARGONAUT MIND



A romanticized version of the all-male world of the Forty-miners was painted by Charles C. Nahl in “Sunday Morning in the Mines.”

Should Lancaster and friends we love
Be never brought to mind?
No! No! Although our bodies rove
Our hearts remain behind!

*From gold rush song recorded in
Samuel McNeil's diary*

Scholarship on women on the American frontier shows signs of quickening, and most of the new investigations begin with an analysis of women's writings, a natural enough place to start.¹ But it is misleading to overlook evidence of the frontier experience left by the men who shared the arduous migratory journey. Between 1849 and 1851 the overland trail to California was traveled almost exclusively by men who had been touched with gold fever after the discovery at Sutter's Mill in 1848. Certainly some of these argonauts were so obsessed with the prospect of fabulous wealth that little else seemed to matter. For most of the forty-niners, however, the experience of leaving home and providing for themselves physically and psychologically in the absence of women was profoundly enlightening. If any strain of thought unified the forty-niners, it was surely the sharp awareness that, often for the first time in their lives, they were without women and families. For many this resulted in a new consciousness of the practical and emotional roles women and families played in their lives, and, for some, the experience engendered regret that they had left home at all.²

Forty-niner diaries and letters are rich sources for

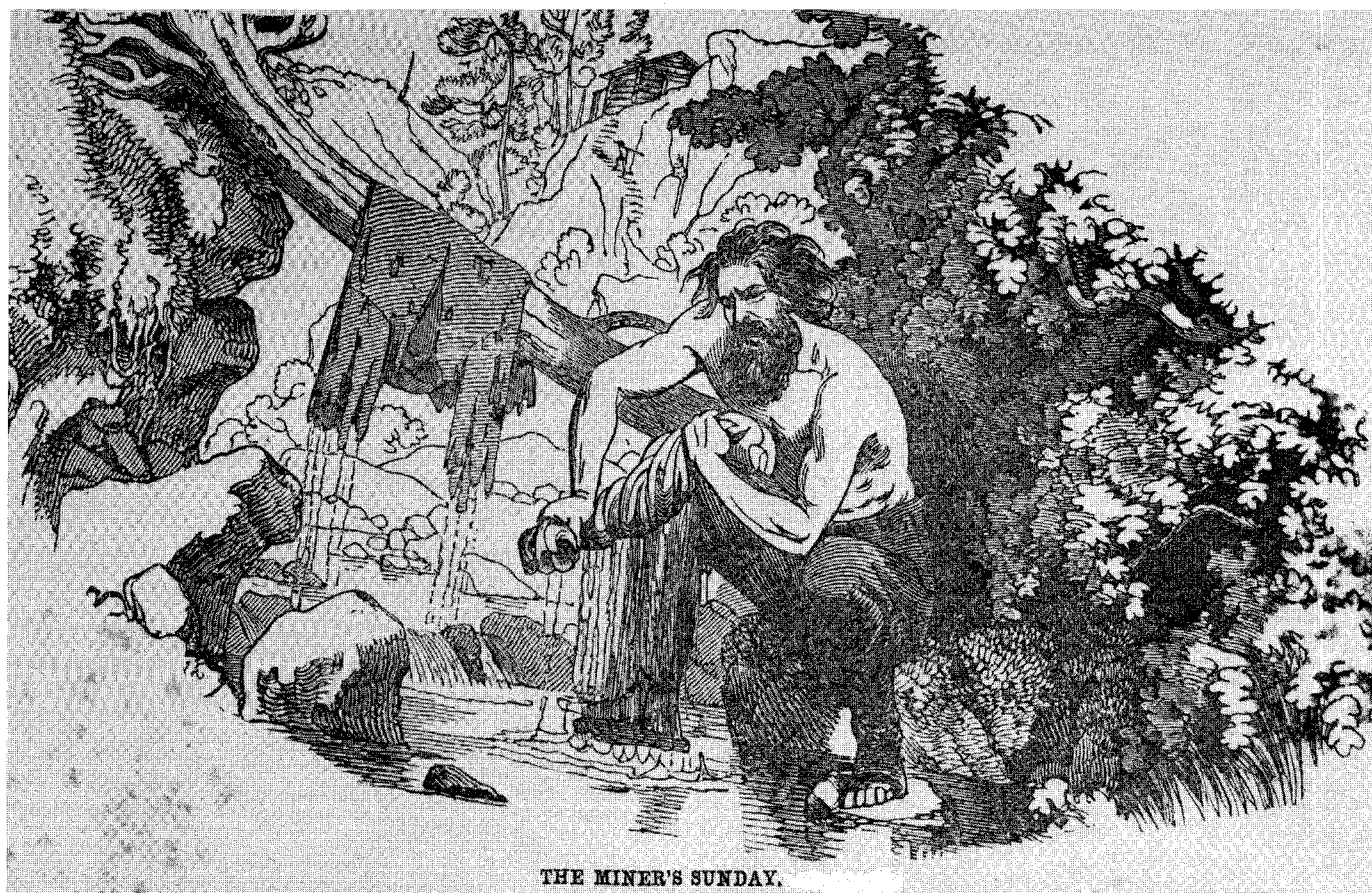
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studying male attitudes toward women and families. Because men traveling to California and living in the gold fields without women were forced to take on traditionally female tasks such as cooking, laundering, and sewing, their personal written accounts reveal the attitudinal importance of this enforced sex-role change. Secondly, their diaries suggest that the absence of women from the forty-niner wagon trains and the mining camps of California made neither experience a "man's world." Physical absence seems to have brought forth increased psychological dependence on women and revealed to the argonaut diarists the physical and emotional importance of their sweethearts, wives, and mothers back home.

Most of the participants in the first three years of the gold rush, of course, were male. A reasonable estimate for the total migration to California in 1849 is 50,000 people, of which some 30,000 came by the northern overland route from western Missouri through present day Nebraska, Wyoming, southern Idaho or northern Utah, Nevada, and California.³ Traditional conjecture places the emigrants at nearly 95 percent male.⁴ One other estimate, a figure assigned by the postal clerk at Fort Laramie, supposed that 97 percent of the emigrants in the 1850s were men and that there were more children than women on the trail.⁵

Whatever the exact percentage of women and children, it is more significant that the men who kept trail journals repeatedly noted their absence and made explicit and happily surprised references to their occasional appearance. Women and children were "curiosities" and "novelties." In June, 1849, for example, David Cosad "saw some white woman—the first we had seen in over two months."⁶ Or as one miner noted glumly: "Deer are getting very scarce and—'dears'—are still scarcer."⁷

For the 30,000 emigrants who crossed the northern plains in 1849, there remain 132 known diaries, a statistically small number amounting to less than .5 percent.⁸ This study is based on an examination of sixty-eight of



THE MINER'S SUNDAY.

these northern plains diaries, including the only two extant women's accounts, and additional letters, sea journals, southern route diaries, and several northern route diaries for the years 1850-1852. Many of the accounts end with their authors' arrivals in California, though some continue on to provide glimpses of life in the mining camps.

Some of the diaries are simply records of mileage and weather conditions; others are fragmentary accounts. In the main, however, emigrant diaries make informative, entertaining reading because the diarists were observant, intelligent, and articulate, offering opinions on a variety of subjects. Extensive references to women and families make the diaries excellent sources for an examination of human relationships in the period, but they are sources that must be used with care.

One problem with diaries is their lack of complete candor. For example, the researcher will look in vain for information concerning the diarists' sex lives, including possible homosexual contacts. Sex was not often discussed in print in mid-nineteenth century America. Diaries, like letters, were sometimes intended for publi-

cation, and in almost all cases were written for relatives. As one diarist admitted: "I have left out all parts as should not be 'Recollected' for there has many scenes taken place & been exhibited on the 'Plaines' that should sleep in their silent & dreary wilds, & never be spoken or read of by civilized men."⁹ At best, diarists offer incomplete pictures of life on the trail.

A more troubling problem is that of typicality, or representativeness. The more articulate argonauts, of course, left a higher proportion of diaries, and a survey of the diarists' professions reveals an unusual number of past and future doctors, judges, and politicians. The California migration was not a lower class movement, but neither was it purely one of the upper-middle class; many diarists were revolted by the activities and habits of their less exalted compatriots. Another problem is that the less articulate and educated diarists offer fewer clues about their emotions and thoughts. Finally, attitudinal history itself is a risk-filled proposition. What the diarists say they feel must be taken as representative of their true thoughts. Yet diarists rarely seemed to act on their perceptions; they say, for instance, that they miss their

*Miners forced to wash their own clothes
could not help but appreciate the services
of the women back home.*

wives, but few returned home in less than two years' time.

It would, nevertheless, be foolish to overlook the great potential of the diaries as historical sources. They are rich and interesting primary documents that express what some men thought to be important at one time. They are not the last word on all forty-niners or on all mid-century Americans, but they contain a rare expression of the feelings and attitudes of the argonauts.

"How do you like it overland?" his mother she will say,
"All right, excepting cooking, then the devil is to pay;
For some won't cook, and others can't, and then it's
curse and damn.

The coffee-pot's begun to leak, so has the frying pan."

From gold rush song "Crossing the Plains"

The relative absence of women on the trail and in California forced the forty-niners to assume roles traditionally occupied by women. Though a number of the diarists were bachelors, many were young men who lived at home and enjoyed their mothers' services. For most of the diarists, the chores of cooking, washing clothes, and sewing were new. Entertainment also took on new dimensions, and diarists commented on the novelty of finding a female dance partner and the necessity for men to take women's roles. But no consensus was achieved on the meaning of the role-changing. Some diarists proudly claimed they had successfully filled traditionally female roles, while others cursed their lot, failed miserably, and evinced a heightened sensitivity to the arduousness of women's work.

With an occasional note of gratitude to Providence or a mother-in-law's recipe, some diarists wrote eagerly of their new-found aptitude for cooking.¹⁰ While several were simply satisfied with their abilities to prepare palatable meals, others boasted that their dishes "would

have been called fine even in the States," or that their meals were the equal of their wives'.¹¹ Elijah Farnham grudgingly agreed to cook for his mess, and within a few days he became possessive about his meals: "There was considerable wrangling about the mess. No helping themselves to bread."¹² There were even several gourmet cooks. Amos Bachelder's parboiled grouse, William McBride's apple dumplings, and Jasper Hixson's coffee—roasted well and "kept . . . in a tight vessel to get all the aroma"—were served with pride and greeted with enthusiasm.¹³

Less likely to be performed with virtuosity was the task of washing clothes. Of course, few men liked doing laundry (as did few women), but several diarists took a stoical stance. They viewed it as an unavoidable chore "the journey . . . rendered necessary" and spoke of it as perfunctorily as other diarists might speak of hunting buffalo.¹⁴ Writing from the mines, Epaphroditus Wells assured his wife that "it takes but a few minutes to wash a shirt, drawers & a pair of socks," incidentally revealing the extent of many an emigrant's wardrobe.¹⁵ Charles Bush's letter to his parents shows a young man enjoying his newly won freedom: "We ware cloaths here the same as we did in the States, such as pantaloons, but no petticoates. We do our washing; we wash our own cloths and our own faces and when we dont choos to wash we go with dirty cloths and dirty faces too."¹⁶ Bush's comments aptly summarize the thinking of those who felt they had adapted to the trail and did not need female cooks or laundresses. How much of their pride was merely bravado is left to the psycho-historian to discover.

Men on the trail were forced to adjust their patterns of relaxation and their forms of entertainment. Fighting homesickness and taking every possible opportunity to socialize with frontier women, they nonetheless organized and seemed to enjoy traditionally male activities or ones that had involved women but could be undertaken without them. Accordingly, the men hunted, played cards, and debated.¹⁷ They even got together for

The arrival of mail from home caused great excitement and sometimes severe disappointment for lonely miners, many of whom were separated from loved ones for several years.

dances, or "Hoe Downs."¹⁸ At one celebration, Charles Kirkpatrick observed, "The boys all apparently enjoy[ed] themselves as well as if they had been at Fishers tavern to a new years ball."¹⁹ Invited to a party in Yuba City, California, John Brazier discovered that only seven women would attend. At their encouragement, Brazier dressed in women's clothing "and danced half the night ere any of the men knew but what he was a woman."²⁰

Despite the resourcefulness of some men who readily changed roles, a greater number displayed a marked inability to cook, wash, and sew, and many of them expressed increased sensitivity to the enormity of performing these tasks. Though neither the persistence of this sensitivity nor its result can be shown by the diaries, the fact that emigrants acknowledged its existence says much about the importance of the trail and the California mines as settings which produced attitudinal changes.

Whether the men cooked or not, there were certainly good reasons for complaints about trail food. The hardships of three months of overland travel made it impossible to use fresh food, made cooking contingent on finding wood or dried buffalo chips, and diminished variety in the menu.²¹ More often, though, unsatisfactory meals stemmed from the cooks' incompetence. The overland journals are filled with stories concerning raw bacon, burned bread, and men paralyzed by the necessity to cook supper.²² Henry Shombre's party, cooking for the first time, produced "bread ½ dow ½ burnt . . . supper shure!"²³ This meal compared favorably with Niles Searls' bread, which had the consistency of "gutta percha" and had to be thrown out.²⁴ Henry Austin boiled too much rice and "spoiled it all;" the following morning he reported an "unpleasant feeling in gastric region."²⁵

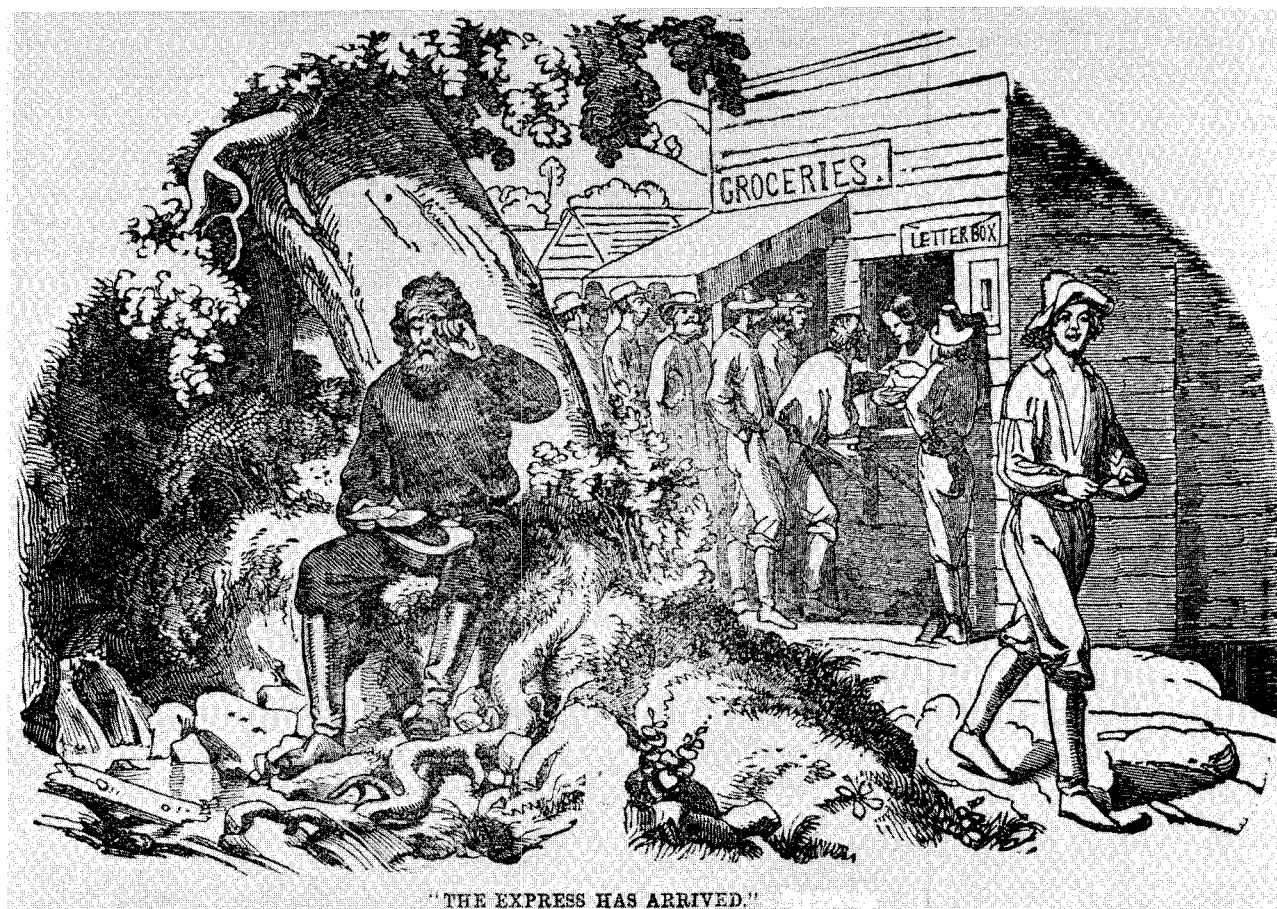
Fresh meat was a rare treat on the trail, and Alonzo Delano, having shot an antelope, gleefully prepared himself a steak. He naively placed the meat on the coals, where it soon burned. Seeking to salvage his prize, Delano melted a stearin candle which he poured over the

steak as gravy and sat down to enjoy his feast, "the envy of several lookers-on." With his first bite, the stearin cooled, hardened, and coated his mouth "with a covering like hard beeswax, making mastication next to impossible." Delano promptly shared his meal with his unsuspecting messmates.²⁶

The men's incompetence as cooks frequently reminded them of their sweethearts, wives, and mothers who had fed them in the past. On the trail, diarist Charles Ferguson remembered his mother's cooking, and Finley McDiarmid wished his wife were with him when he found it difficult and "unpleasant" to prepare his own meals.²⁷ In letters, too, miners expressed their homesickness in terms of "cakes and pies," registering their *in absentia* appreciation for women's singular abilities.²⁸

Although the forty-niners' longing for women to cook their meals was hardly a portent for the increased freedom of women in the nineteenth century, the diarists' newfound appreciation for the difficulty and importance of the role should not be overlooked. Was their appreciation and sensitivity enough to draw them away from the gold fields? One eminent historian of the gold rush has noted that "the goal of all was a quick fortune and a speedy return 'home'."²⁹ We know also, with diarist R. C. Shaw, that "many a miner left California for his home with more dyspepsia than gold."³⁰

For many diarists, washing was another disagreeable task that warranted strong written complaint. Some men showed reluctance even to attempt washing clothes. If the diarists' explicit mention of doing laundry accurately indicates the number of times they performed the chore, the intervals between washings were often long indeed.³¹ In a letter to his wife mailed from the trail, Henry Page requested she "tell Mother the soap answers first rate—though we have not yet washed any of our clothes."³² On July 22, 1849, William Chamberlain recorded: "Changed my undercloths & think the first time since I took my bath in William Creek;" that had been nearly a month earlier. Chamberlain wryly added



"THE EXPRESS HAS ARRIVED."

that he "omited Ironing and Starching."³³ Jasper Hill wrote that many miners never washed clothes. When their outfits became uncomfortably dirty, they simply bought new ones, or, as Samuel Swearingen put it, "We pull them off and throw them."³⁴

Even when the men did resolve to do their laundry, many met with difficulty. Washing clothes was "a sad task," "a sorry business to the hands," or "the most disagreeable part of the trip."³⁵ After much scrubbing, Niles Searls was unsure whether he had cleaned his clothes or simply attained "an equalisation of dirt" throughout the garments.³⁶ William Johnston placed his clothes in a stream, walked back to camp for his soap, and returned to find that most of his clothes had drifted off. He consoled himself that he would have less laundry to do in the future.³⁷

The difficulties of washing clothes sensitized some diarists to the contributions made by women as laundresses. After washing, reflected Delano, "We thought of our wives and sweet-hearts at home, and wondered that we were ever dissatisfied with their impatience on a washing day." Had the women been present, he con-

tinued, "We should heartily have asked their pardon, and allowed them to scold to their heart's content." Delano repeated his promise a month later at wash time.³⁸ Having "equalized" his dirt, Searls vowed to "more fully appreciate the labor of those by whom this arduous task is performed."³⁹ Peter Decker "concluded the washerwoman earns all & more than she gets."⁴⁰ Obviously, role changes compelled by the California migration affected the attitudes of these men who made the crossing. Respect and appreciation for women as laundresses mingled freely with the less salutary hope that the women remain content with their traditional occupation.

Occasional references to sewing also appear in the diaries. Stephen Gage lost his wallet through a hole in his back pocket, the result, he thought, of "not having a woman" to do the mending.⁴¹ James Lyne, in a revealing admission, wrote: "I have always been inclined to deride the vocation of ladies until now but must confess it by far the most irksome I have ever tried." Lyne attributed his heightened consciousness to an examination of his wife's stitching on his saddle bag.⁴²

Conclusions about role changes drawn from this increased appreciation for female contributions to daily life must remain tentative. The diarists who believed they had readily adjusted to women's roles may have hardened their attitudes toward women. There is also no reason to believe that any of the diarists would have sought to release women from the travail of domestic tasks. Nonetheless, role-assumption among most of the male emigrants clearly brought increased appreciation for the women who performed in the roles.

I shall ne'er forgit my feelins when I bid adieu to all;
 Sally cotched me round the neck, then I began to bawl;
 When I sot in, they all commenced—you ne'er did hear
 the like,
 How they all took on and cried, the day I left old Pike.

From gold rush song "Joe Bowers"

For most argonauts the decision to travel west meant leaving behind female and familial contacts. It was not, in many cases, a decision made easy by the allure of fortune, but instead one known to mean prolonged separation and physical ordeal. There were, of course, exceptions. Henry Page was apparently henpecked, and W. W. Call "on more than one occasion" was urged by his wife to leave.⁴³ Most often, however, diarists recorded moving scenes of leavetaking: Charles Tuttle wrote a long and passionate letter to his wife several days from home; Peter Decker "lost control of his feelings;" and Albert Thurber's mother "clasped [him] around the neck and wept" after exacting a promise that he not return a pauper.⁴⁴ Many of those who started west became discouraged, felt pangs of responsibility, and turned back.⁴⁵

Gold was the major reason for the 1849 California migration, and some emigrants invested the metal with

transcendent qualities far in excess of its mundane ability to make men wealthy. Jasper Hixson marvelled that the pursuit of gold dust could cause men to leave their families and made an apt analogy to the crusades.⁴⁶ But few who speculated about their motivations remained as honest. Fate, not gold, impelled them forward, or, as B. F. Washington put it in verse: "But ah! A change came over me and I have left my home,/ A wanderer to a stranger land, mid howling wastes to roam."⁴⁷ In a similar vein, Lucius Fairchild of St. Joseph observed: "I may be foolish[,] but something urges me onward and onward."⁴⁸ Again and again the men absolved themselves of all responsibility in the face of a powerful conspiracy of unseen forces that carried them from their homes.

But no amount of rationalization could overcome the severe homesickness experienced by a majority of the diarists on the trail or in California. Homesickness involved a constellation of factors, and, recalling the miner whose loneliness could have been eased by home-baked "cakes and pies," the components relating to women and family are not always easy to isolate. The specificity of many forty-niner diarists in this regard is therefore both convenient and striking, and it speaks volumes for the psychological influence held by women and families. If this admission by men of their emotional ties emerges nowhere else in western literature, it appears in the accounts of the California trail.

While the desire for women as domestic helpers and civilizing influences reinforced and cannot be fully separated from the psychological longing for women, it was precisely the latter that occupied the thoughts of many unmarried diarists. Thus, Henry Shombre became melancholy during a stroll among the flowers: "Wish for a pretty girl but alas have none."⁴⁹ A quiet Christmas in the mines forced George Jewett to confront "the loneliness of man and his dependence for pleasure upon woman," an admission revealing the limitations of his all-male entertainment.⁵⁰ Enos Christman wrote his

fiancée that his love for her had increased with the length of his absence, a phenomenon often described by homesick diarists.⁵¹ Peter Decker, though more circumspect, worried that he would return to find all the home-town women married.⁵² Though a greater proportion of single than married diarists remained in the mines, the allure of sweethearts or female acquaintances at home was often enough to carry a miner back. Many diarists notably referred to their journeys as “absences” rather than permanent relocations.

Letters and diary entries regarding homesickness for sweethearts did not match the intensity of the accounts of married men. Desperation increased as the married

diarists moved farther and farther from their families and away from mail service. Domestic differences were soon forgotten, replaced by anxious concern for their families’ welfare.

In early May, for example, W. N. Steuben experienced “some melancholly reflections;” by July he feared his absence was “insupportable.”⁵³ By the time Samuel McCoy reached Independence, Missouri, his love for his wife had “doubled, trebled . . . and run [] over,” and “parental affection . . . rent [his] aching heart” as he prospected for gold along the American River.⁵⁴ To his mortification, Samuel Swearingen found that he had forgotten how his youngest son looked.⁵⁵ One emigrant



A LIVE WOMAN IN THE MINES.

The occasional arrival of a respectable woman in the gold fields was an event of consequence and celebration.

We miss thy cheering, winning smile,
So familiar when at home;
We miss thy merry, ringing laugh,
Thy sweetest, gentlest tone;
We miss thee more and more each day—
In truth thou'rt missed in every way.

From gold rush song "We Miss Thee, Ladies"

closed his letter, "Good-by with tears"; another's homesickness "lacerated" his feelings; a third missed an "answering look of affection" as he stood with arms outstretched looking eastward from the Continental Divide.⁵⁶

Occasionally, fatalistic diarists cursed their folly in having left their families and feared the worst. An Ann Arbor doctor, C. N. Ormsby, fantasized that cholera had entered Michigan. Making an alarmingly short step to morbidity, Ormsby wrote his wife from Salt Lake City: "I speak and think of my dear children as though I were conscious of their continued playful and sportive existence. But how do I know, but that on this day, one, two, perhaps all of them are reposing beneath the sod? How know I, but that at some moment of my highest cheerfulness and merriment, the funeral knell of my wife echoed over the hills of Ann Arbor?"⁵⁷ David McCollum despaired of ever returning to see his wife and children and swore he would be happy to support them in a conventional, if humble, manner should he be fortunate enough to arrive back home. McCollum's fatalism is perhaps understandable, as he was good friends with Dr. Ormsby.⁵⁸

An argument with his wife may have strengthened Henry Page's resolve to go to California, yet his copious letters home were reassuring almost from the start. From St. Joseph, Page wrote that he had begun "to

realise more & more, my separation from you"; two days later, he observed that "absence increases all those kind & dear feelings I have for you." By the time he reached California, Page claimed not only that his love for his wife had "increased one hundred fold," but he apologized for starting the fight and confessed that its cause was his "perverse disposition." When Mary wrote that their young son was learning to talk, and Page read his son's words—"Papa & me work in the field & mama cook dinner"—Page's eyes filled with tears. The family was happily reunited in early 1851.⁵⁹

Although there is no evidence that David DeWolf was henpecked into joining the westward migration, his first letter to his wife Matilda, written from Cincinnati, reveals a man of independence and some callousness. He directed Matilda to send him money "as soon as you can as I cannot get along without it," and he closed the body of the letter simply: "I have no more to write." There was no indication of homesickness in DeWolf's straightforward narrative.

Two months later, in June, 1849, DeWolf wrote from the Platte River. There was a perceptible softening of his attitude as he allowed himself to confess, "To tell you the truth Tilda I have been homesick several times, & if I get home I am sure I will never leave it again long at a time." Becoming more emotional over the months, he criticized himself for leaving home, visualized kissing his daughter, and dreamed the inevitable dreams of home. "If a man wants to learn the value of a wife," he declared, "let him have one & leave her & come to California."

DeWolf arrived in Weaverville in late October, 1849, expecting to discover a letter from his wife. Finding none, he became despondent. Trying to persuade himself that his wife had written, he blamed the mail service and claimed to hear "a silent voice whisper she has not forgotten you." Throughout the following autumn and winter of 1849, DeWolf wrote long, discursive letters, the themes of which were always the same: "Matilda

THE MINERS' LAMENTATIONS.

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for Gods sake write." DeWolf, like other diarists, admitted crying from loneliness. DeWolf finally received a letter in May, 1850. He was overjoyed, but his anxiety to return home lingered. He left the mines late that winter and was home by early spring.⁶⁰

Unlike Page and DeWolf, many of the young gold seekers were single and particularly possessed a keen filial piety. Of course, the most prolific diarists and letter writers corresponded with parents as well as with sweethearts or wives. The pattern of increasing homesickness and subsequent appreciation for the psychological power of women and families persists in the relationships between diarists and their parents and relatives.

A number of miners greatly missed their childhood homes.⁶¹ Peter Decker wrote often of his absence from the "family circle" which included his brothers and sisters. Listening to his traveling companions sing folksongs, Decker was reminded of home, "of other days & better — of the unbroken family circle." These reflections on family, he claimed, tempered the natural tendency toward selfishness on the plains.⁶²

Lucius Fairchild wrote to his parents and his sister's family at nearly every opportunity. Carrying with him

his mother's ring and pictures of his family, he reflected sadly, "No one has left more at home than me." Pausing in St. Joseph, Fairchild considered returning home when he realized that no letters could reach him once he crossed the Missouri. After making an agonizing decision to continue on, he apologized to his sister for having been "mean and troublesome," and assured her that she and their mother had always been his "best and dearest friends."

From California, Fairchild wrote of his anxiety about home and advised all his friends against making the journey. He joked that prospecting for gold would make him a good father, because he had learned to "rock the cradle to perfection," and he instructed his mother to "tell all the girls." Eventually, Fairchild grew tired of mining and tired of resisting the pull toward home. He returned to Wisconsin "and home and mother" in 1855.⁶³

Although homesickness could strike the sensitive diarist or letter writer at any time, certain events seemed more likely to bring it to the surface. A holiday such as the Fourth of July, a quiet Sunday afternoon, or simply a walk under the stars were enough to make many diarists melancholy.⁶⁴ Homesickness also appeared when

A popular gold rush lettersheet facetiously offered moral guidelines for men cut loose from the tempering influence of home and family.

the emigrant failed adequately to assume a woman's role. Nothing, however, called it forth as rapidly as encountering sickness or death.

That homesickness surfaced during times of suffering is not surprising, but this occurrence helps distinguish the emotion from a general hankering for a woman to fill her societal roles. Most doctors, of course, were men, but when the emigrant felt ill, he usually did not want a doctor as much as he wanted a woman's care. With "every bone . . . on the aiche," the ailing Charles Tinker thought of home; suffering a mild case of dysentery, William Chamberlain missed "the comforts of home, the kind attentions of dear ones."⁶⁵ Isaac Foster, also a victim of dysentery, admitted: "Much better if a person is sick to be at home where his wife or his bosom . . . can sympathize with him, and administer to his relief."⁶⁶ Though some bore their afflictions stoically, sickness frequently triggered confessions of homesickness from even the most stubbornly independent diarists.

Death on the plains and in the mines was a fairly common occurrence. Yet diarists seem to have been especially concerned that they might die alone, far from civilization, with no sweetheart, wife, or mother, as one diarist put it, to "chafe [his] temple and wipe the cold sweat from [his] brow."⁶⁷ Several men suggested that death at home would be preferable to the mere threat of death on the plains "where no tender hand is nigh to smooth the dying man's pillow," if indeed he had a pillow.⁶⁸ The peripatetic Dr. Ormsby told of visiting two men at Fort Laramie who were dying of cholera. Asked to stay and talk to them, Ormsby found himself "describing to them my separation from my family." Suddenly, both men began "sob[bing] convulsively," and the doctor realized he had broached too sensitive a subject. "Of course," he concluded, "my further utterance was choked. All we could do was to let sympathy have its scope."⁶⁹

Chronic melancholy was not the only result of homesickness. From time to time, miners became suspicious

of sweethearts and wives, and their regret for having left home was consumed by nagging jealousy. Suspicion, like homesickness, increased over the months without news from home. Enos Christman, Samuel McCoy, and Charles Tuttle voiced their suspicions in letters home; Tuttle warned his wife about men who would "haul down the souls and bodies of their unsuspecting victims into the lowest depths of hell." This was not, it would seem, an isolated fear. The popular forty-niner song "Joe Bowers" begins with sobbing Sally trying to prevent Joe from leaving, but ends with Joe learning that his Sally has married another.

The depth of homesickness discovered in the diaries and letters of the argonauts indicates a profound psychological dependence upon women and families. Men on the California trail, lacking women to perform domestic chores and to give emotional support, came face to face with their reliance on women and experienced heightened sensitivity to the importance of women in their lives.

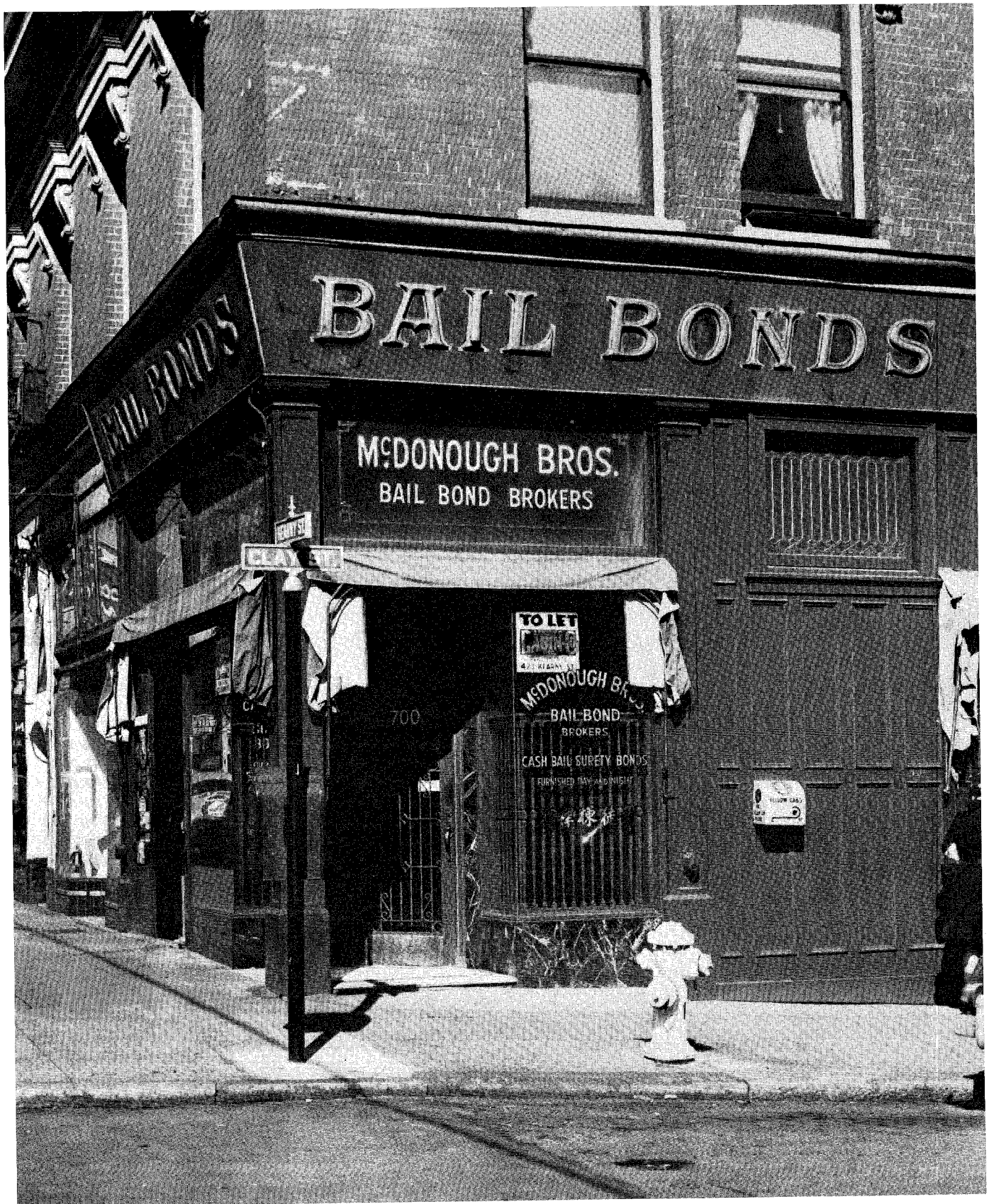
While this does not mean that men forthwith moved to share women's tasks or allowed women to control their own lives, it does indicate that descriptions of the California gold rush as a male movement are correct only in the sense of a head count. The psychological importance of the women left at home made them shadow members of every party of California argonauts.

The Nahl painting is courtesy the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento. The three drawings are from Alonzo Delano, *Pen Knife Sketches; or, Chips of the Old Block* (Sacramento, 1854), pp. 17, 21, 33. "Miners' Lamentations" is courtesy the Huntington Library, San Marino. The Ten Commandments lettersheet is from the CHS Collections.

Notes

1. Important older studies such as those by William F. Sprague and Dee Brown are now being revised—directly or obliquely—by scholars who have learned from the new women's history. Articles by Beverly Stoeltje and Glenda Riley on the image of frontier women and by Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell on overland trail women have introduced a refreshing subtlety to the field. Forthcoming studies by Lillian Schlissel promise to further enrich our understanding of the frontier experience. See William Forrest Sprague, *Women and the West: A Short Social History* (Boston, 1940); Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers* (Lincoln, 1958); Beverly Stoeltje, "'A Helpmate for Man Indeed': The Image of the Frontier Woman," *Journal of American Folklore*, 88 (January-March, 1975): 27; Glenda Riley, "Images of the Frontierswoman: Iowa as a Case Study," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 8 (April, 1977): 189; Johnny Faragher and Christine Stansell, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail to California and Oregon, 1842-1867," *Feminist Studies*, 2 (February-March, 1975): 150.
2. Faragher and Stansell write that "men viewed drudgery, calamity, and privation as trials along the road to prosperity, unfortunate but inevitable corollaries of the rational decision they had made" ("Women and their Families," 153). This conclusion incorrectly ascribes a confident single-mindedness to the forty-niners and indicates the authors' failure to examine systematically sources left by men during the westward migration.
3. Russell E. Bidlack, ed., *Letters Home: The Story of Ann Arbor's Forty-Niners* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 51; Helen S. Giffin, ed., *The Diaries of Peter Decker* (Georgetown, Cal., 1966), p. 9; Georgia Willis Read, "Women and Children on the Oregon-California Trail in the Gold Rush Years," *Missouri Historical Review*, 29 (October, 1944): 6.
4. Georgia Willis Read, an avid student of the California gold rush, speculates that diarists, newspaper editors, and military clerks—the principal sources for this guesswork—unwittingly overlooked women in wagon trains because they often remained inside the covered wagons rather than walking or riding alongside. Accordingly, Read suggests that 85 percent of the 1849 emigrants were men, 10 percent were women, and 5 percent were children.
5. Finley McDiarmid to his wife, June 20, 1850, Letters of Finley McDiarmid, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (henceforth "Bancroft").
6. Giffin, *Peter Decker*, 143-48; Diary of Henry Austin, July 5, 1849, Bancroft; "Journal of a Trip to California by the Overland Route," David Cosad, June 24, 1849, California Historical Society, San Francisco (henceforth "CHS").
7. Joseph Schafer, ed., "California Letters of Lucius Fairchild," *Wisconsin Historical Society Collections*, 31 (1931): 59.
8. The most complete bibliography of 1849 northern-route diaries has been assembled by Dale Morgan in *The Overland Diary of James A. Pritchard* (Denver, 1959).
9. "The Plains and Deserts of North America," Tipton Lindsey September 7, 1849, Bancroft.
10. Thomas D. Clark, ed., *Gold Rush Diary: Being the Journal of Elisha Douglas Perkins on the Overland Trail in the Spring and Summer of 1849* (Lexington, Ky., 1967), pp. 53-4.
11. Doyce B. Nunis, ed., *The Letters of a Young Miner* (San Francisco, 1964), p. 13; Epaphroditus Wells to his wife, May 8, 1849, Letters of Epaphroditus Wells, Bancroft; Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, August 15, 1849, Bancroft; Israel F. Hale, "Diary of a Trip to California in 1849," *Society of California Pioneers Quarterly*, 2 (June, 1925): 109; Samuel McCoy, *Pioneering on the Plains* (Kaukauna, Wisconsin, 1924), pp. 38, 54-5.
12. Merrill Mattes and Esley J. Kirk, eds., "From Ohio to California in 1849: The Gold Rush Journal of Elijah Bryan Farnham," *Indiana Magazine of History*, September-December, 1950, p. 303.
13. "Journal to California, 1849," Amos Bachelder, 20, CHS; William G. Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner* (New York, 1973), p. 41; Diary of Jasper Morris Hixson, 10, CHS.
14. "Diary of the 'Boston and Newton Joint Stock Association' in Crossing the Plains in 1849," Charles Gould, 46, Bancroft; Everett Walters and George B. Strother, eds., "The Gold Rush Diary of Henry Tappan," *Annals of Wyoming*, 25 (June, 1953): 118; "Journal of a Trip to California Across the Continent from Weston, Mo., to Weber Creek, Cal., in the summer of 1850," Charles W. Smith, May 26, 1850, CHS.
15. Epaphroditus Wells to his wife, January 19, 1851, Letters of Epaphroditus Wells, Bancroft.
16. Charles Bush to his parents, August 20, 1850, Letters of Charles Bush, Bancroft.
17. "Journal of 1849, Dr. T.—," 6, Bancroft; Diary of Henry Austin, April 18, 1849, Bancroft.
18. Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, May 6, July 24, 1849, Bancroft; Clark, *Elisha Douglas Perkins*, 81; "Elijah Bryan Farnham," 415.
19. Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, May 10, 1849, Bancroft.
20. "'49 Experiences," William Armstrong, 12, Bancroft.
21. Alonzo Delano, *Life on the Plains and Among the Diggings* (Ann Arbor, 1854, 1966), p. 75; Kimball Webster, *The Gold Seekers of '49* (Manchester, N.H., 1917), p. 34; Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner*, 88; Diary of William Chamberlain, June 18, 1849, Bancroft.
22. Clark, *Elisha Douglas Perkins*, 4; Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner*, 134.
23. Diary of Henry Shombre, April 2, 1849, Bancroft.
24. Diary of Niles Searls, May 27, 1849, Bancroft.
25. Diary of Henry Austin, July 18-19, 1849, Bancroft.
26. Delano, *Life on the Plains*, 224.
27. Charles D. Ferguson, *The Experiences of a Forty-Niner* (Cleve-

- land, 1888), pp. 92-3; Finley McDiarmid to his wife, May 22, 1850, Letters of Finley McDiarmid, Bancroft.
28. McCoy, *Pioneering*, 100; Nunis, *Letters of a Young Miner*, 31.
29. Rodman Paul, *California Gold* (Harvard, 1947), p. 82.
30. R. C. Shaw, *Across the Plains in Forty-Nine* (Chicago, 1948), p. 151.
31. See David M. Potter, ed., *Trail to California: The Overland Journey of Vincent Geiger and Wakeman Bryarly* (New Haven, 1945), *passim*.
32. Elizabeth Page, ed., *Wagons West* (New York, 1930), p. 109.
33. Diary of William Chamberlain, July 22, 1849, Bancroft.
34. Nunis, *Letters of a Young Miner*, 18; Samuel Swearingen to his wife, August 31, 1851, Letters of Samuel Swearingen, CHS. Some miners apparently went to extraordinary lengths to avoid the onerous chore, sending their laundry to China to be washed, starched, and ironed. An example of this is cited by Brown, *Gentle Tamers*, 295.
35. Journal of Charles Kirkpatrick, May 14, 1849, Bancroft; S. B. F. Clark, *How Many Miles from St. Jo?* (San Francisco, 1929), p. 13; John Evans Brown, "Memoirs of an American Gold Seeker," *Journal of American History*, II (1908): 148.
36. Diary of Niles Searls, June 7, 1849, Bancroft.
37. Johnston, *Experiences of a Forty-Niner*, 132.
38. Delano, *Life on the Plains*, 64, 141.
39. Diary of Niles Searls, June 7, 1849, Bancroft.
40. Giffen, *Peter Decker*, 115.
41. "Diary and Reminiscences," Stephen T. Gage, May 22, 1852, in Borel Collection, Bender Room, Main Library, Stanford University.
42. Potter, *Geiger and Bryarly*, 94n.
43. Page, *Wagons West*, 94; Diary of W. W. Call, 1, Bancroft.
44. Charles Tuttle to his wife, March 28, 1849, Letters of Charles Tuttle, Bancroft; Giffen, ed., *Peter Decker*, 40; Journal of Albert K. Thurber, 17, Bancroft.
45. Walker D. Wyman, ed., *California Emigrant Letters* (New York, 1951), pp. 31-2.
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49. Diary of Henry Shombre, April 8, 1849, Bancroft.
50. Diary of George Jewett, December 25, 1849, Bancroft.
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52. Giffen, *Peter Decker*, 22.
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55. Swearingen's guilt was assuaged when he was able to mentally reconstruct his son's face using one of the boy's curls sent by his wife. Nevertheless, Swearingen left the mines for home in late 1851. Swearingen to his wife, November 12, 1850 and March 9, 1851, Letters of Samuel Swearingen, CHS.
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57. Bidlack, *Letters Home*, 36-7, 42.
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59. Page, *Wagons West*, 94, 99, 102, 207, 222.
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62. Giffen, *Peter Decker*, 44, 58, 115.
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66. Lucy Foster Sexton, ed., *The Foster Family: California Pioneers* (Santa Barbara, 1925), p. 72.
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At the McDonough Brothers' inauspicious bail bonds office on Clay and Kearny streets, the nearby Yellow Cab telephone figured prominently in the multifold operations.

"FOUNTAINHEAD OF CORRUPTION"

Peter P. McDonough, Boss of San Francisco's Underworld

Residents of San Francisco between 1910 and 1941 nostalgically refer to those years as "the Golden Decades."¹ They remember living in the "gayest, lightest-hearted and most pleasure-loving city on the Western Continent."² The city's politics were dominated by two mayors, dashing "Sunny Jim" Rolph and affable Angelo Rossi, who presided over the city's destiny for thirty-two years beginning in 1911. The men remained almost universally popular throughout their terms at City Hall, always able "to provoke a spontaneous public ovation without sending runners ahead to make sure it was spontaneous."³ There was good reason for their popularity: the three decades saw the city grow by over thirty percent to 635,000 residents, construct the nation's first municipally owned street-car system, build the massive Hetch Hetchy water project, host two gala world's fairs, and bridge the great Bay of San Francisco twice, each span being the largest of its kind in the world.

What is less often recalled is that just below the glamorous civic surface operated an equally vital element of the city's political life. It was a network of vice and graft

deeply rooted in tradition, one which prompted Democratic party boss Chris Buckley to caution in 1890, "Politics is not a branch of the Sunday school business."⁴ Certainly it was more profitable. The 1935 Atherton Investigation of the San Francisco Police Department fixed the annual revenue from vice at between \$4 million and \$5 million and the volume of graft payments at \$1 million per year. Every bit as dominant in this branch of the city's life as Rolph and Rossi were in theirs was a single remarkable individual, Peter P. McDonough of McDonough Brothers' Bail Bond Brokers, for thirty years "the Fountainhead of Corruption" in San Francisco.⁵

Pete McDonough did not create the conditions which allowed his underworld empire to exist. He merely achieved dominance in the subterranean sphere when two disasters—the 1906 Earthquake and Fire and the graft prosecutions of Boss Abe Ruef and Mayor Eugene Schmitz—disrupted the long standing patterns of underworld politics in *fin de siècle* San Francisco. In a city where rebuilding became a mania and residents admonished each other, "Don't talk earthquake; talk business," the nationwide crusade for clean government died an early death. Quips such as the announcement that "in New York . . . there is still great difficulty in securing capital for San Francisco on account of the 'graft persecutions' as they call it there," speeded the demise of the

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Pete McDonough simply gathered the scattered threads of the city's underworld political network into his hands and rewove an empire which included gambling, prostitution, bootlegging, and graft.

Progressive good government movement. It seemed, in fact, that San Francisco "didn't really want to be cleaned up."⁷ Accordingly Pete McDonough simply gathered the scattered threads of the city's underworld political network into his hands and rewove an empire which included gambling, prostitution, bootlegging, and graft. Secure in his position, he reigned as unchallenged "King of the Tenderloin" for a full quarter-century until the economic crisis produced by the Great Depression destroyed him.⁸ As San Francisco madame Sally Stanford observed, "Nothing lasts that long unless the people are willing that it should."⁹ Clearly the reasons for Pete McDonough's longevity and the changes which brought his demise reveal a good deal about the social and political life of San Francisco during the first third of this century.

Despite the occasional newspaper outburst against Pete and his brother and business partner Tom—"The McDonough Brothers must go"—Pete's power and influence remained remarkably constant if not obvious. Both of the city's major newspapers pretended that "San Francisco is the only large American city which has been free from organized crime, from racketeers, and from gangsters."¹⁰ Although no one was ignorant of the existence of vice and graft, J. W. Ehrlich, whose activities as a criminal lawyer frequently brought him into conflict with the McDonough organization, observed, "San Francisco had convinced itself that vice was a necessary evil. There were many, as a matter of fact, who

weren't nearly as convinced that it was an evil as that it was necessary."¹¹ Popular demand therefore required a degree of civic sophistry on the part of local politicians. As Mayor "Sunny Jim" Rolph explained, "Vice can never be totally extinguished. I wish I could suppress it completely, but I can't." Comparing his city to other American and European cities, Rolph concluded, "San Francisco is superior to any of them in the matter of controlling and regulating vice."¹²

The result of this "understanding" attitude toward crime was a tacit agreement among city officials that the vice which existed in San Francisco would be a "home industry" presided over by local residents." In fact, eastern gangsters such as Al Capone found that "the more lucrative forms of crime were so highly organized and well protected that outsiders couldn't break into San Francisco."¹³ This permitted San Francisco to avoid the horrors of gangland violence so common in cities like Chicago and New York in the same years. It seemed that as long as Pete McDonough managed the city's vice operations in a quiet, businesslike manner, no one in San Francisco was disposed to interfere.

Indeed there is little doubt that Pete McDonough looked upon himself as a successful businessman and that a sizeable segment of his fellow citizens accepted his view. When summoned before the grand jury considering evidence uncovered by the 1935 Atherton Investigation, McDonough "hardly appeared to be a master of the underworld." This childless widower of sixty years with white hair and pince-nez glasses presented a quiet, dignified appearance. In a well-tailored brown suit and vest, he appeared to be "a trim and snappily dressed man with a hard mouth and clever bright eyes under heavy white lids." Although he "stood out" in the distinguished group present at the hearing, newspapers described him as "the outward antithesis of the Machiavellian . . . string puller and power behind the scenes." Those who knew McDonough described him as "a soft-spoken, kindly and generous person whose chief relaxation was

his regular Wednesday night Turkish bath and whose personal life was above reproach.”¹⁴ A devout Catholic, he attended mass at Old St. Mary’s Church on Grant Avenue each morning before going to his office and was a major contributor to several Catholic charities.¹⁵ In many respects, his life was typical of the turn-of-the-century businessman who made his fortune pioneering a new product or service.

Pete McDonough was born in 1872, preceded by his brother Tom in 1870. His family lived in San Francisco’s Cow Hollow (now the Marina) District. Patrick McDonough, the father of the two boys, had emigrated to San Francisco in 1859 and worked at a variety of jobs until 1868 when he joined the police department, serving “with credit” for twenty years. During his years with the department he became keeper of the city prison, where he was the officer charged with maintaining custody of the notorious stagecoach robber Black Bart. In 1888, Patrick McDonough became the first officer to receive a pension from the San Francisco Police Department. A year later he opened a saloon at the Old California Exchange on the corner of Clay and Kearney streets.¹⁶

Young Pete McDonough attended Sacred Heart College briefly, but he left school for a job as a cash boy at a men’s haberdashery on the corner of Third and Market streets. Working diligently from nine to nine daily for \$3 a week, he received a promotion to the rank of salesman, a position which left him with a lifelong flair for fashionable dress. In 1894 Patrick McDonough vetoed Pete’s desire to make the men’s clothing business his career and ordered Pete to join his brother as an assistant keeper of the thriving family saloon.¹⁷ The bar was a landmark which had survived the great fire of May 3, 1851, and the earthquake of 1869 to earn *Pacific Wine and Spirits Review*’s commendation as “Frisco’s Most Historic Saloon.”¹⁸ Whether due to its colorful past, the congeniality of its management, or its proximity to the Hall of Justice, “The Corner,” as it was

Whether due to its colorful past, the congeniality of its management, or its proximity to the Hall of Justice, “The Corner” . . . became a popular watering spot for the city’s legal professionals.

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It was this clientele that made it possible for Pete McDonough to embark upon the business which made his fortune. As he later explained, “Many attorneys bought drinks here. As an accommodation we loaned some of them bail money for their clients without charge. We figured they’d all come in to buy drinks. Then we discovered the attorneys were charging their clients for the bail we put up. So we started working on bail bonds in between tending bar.”

Gradually Pete, who seemed to be more of a businessman, concentrated exclusively on the bail bond business while Tom devoted his energy to operating the family saloon. In 1896 they organized the McDonough Brothers’ Bail Bond Brokers firm, the first business of its kind in the United States.¹⁹

Pete McDonough monopolized the bail bond business in San Francisco and quickly earned a substantial fortune which he invested wisely. A friend of A. P. Giannini, he became a major stockholder of Giannini’s Bank of Italy Corporation (later Bank of America).²⁰ By 1930 McDonough’s fortune was estimated at between \$5 million and \$10 million.²¹ He also married into the family of Mayor Angelo Rossi’s executive secretary and acquired a measure of respect in the community.²² A 1931 “Who’s Who” of prominent San Franciscans observed, “McDonough Brothers have a reputation of being honest and ethical exponents of the business which

is their life's work, and their clientage is commensurate with the exceptional ability they have shown."²³ From this perspective Pete McDonough seemed to be a Horatio Alger character whose hard work and ingenuity resulted in his rise to wealth and prominence.

It was in his drive to secure control of all of the bail bond business available in San Francisco that Pete McDonough began to step outside the law. He developed an organization which was remarkably successful in helping men accused of criminal activity avoid punishment. He secured the allegiance of a group of young attorneys who, lawyer Melvin Belli explained, found it necessary to "play ball" with McDonough Brothers in order to be successful in San Francisco.²⁴ The McDonough office became a clearing house which answered all the needs of an accused person, including bond and lawyer. But the thing which made a call to McDonough Brothers obligatory for anyone accused of criminal activity in San Francisco was information. Besides stationing functionaries of the firm at local, state, and federal courts, the McDonough organization created a remarkable network of informants who provided Pete McDonough with information about the needs of prospective clients. Policemen of all ranks could be seen visiting the McDonough office every day. Booking sergeants reportedly provided daily lists of who had been arrested, the charges, and the bail set.²⁵ It was even discovered at one point that a system of wirelasses connected the city prison, outlying jails, and the McDonough office.²⁶ As soon as information about arrests was received, Pete McDonough's nephew, Harry Rice, stepped outside the office and called to one of the four cab drivers who routinely "played the corner." The driver, who earned the right to serve the McDonoughs by being able to locate the city's superior court judges twenty-

four hours a day, was dispatched to obtain the judge's signature on an "OR" (order of release). This rapidly returned the McDonough client to freedom.²⁷

Not all of this very efficient system was completely legal, as a variety of people pointed out throughout McDonough's career. As early as 1907 the city's police commission investigated the "bail bond game" and attacked McDonough's "illegal system of money-getting."²⁸ The US Department of Labor, while investigating a possible frame-up of Tom Mooney in the 1916 Preparedness Day Parade bombing, uncovered enough evidence to produce a major municipal scandal. Pete McDonough was accordingly named as "agent and instigator of most of the supposedly corrupt grand jury and police court intrigue."²⁹ Charges in 1920 of bribery involving McDonough and police judges Morris Oppenheim and John J. Sullivan produced criminal indictments, but no convictions. A good government group called the Women Volunteers enlivened the 1927 municipal election campaign by repeating the twenty-year-old charges that the district attorney's office was dominated by the "bail bond ring."³⁰ Although exposés produced screaming headlines, they never seriously threatened the "King of the Tenderloin." At one point, in fact, Pete McDonough boasted to the press that if the government ever "got anything" on him, he would donate \$10,000 to charity.³²

The success of his organization in protecting those charged with crimes brought Pete McDonough into contact with people engaged in every branch of underworld activity. Gradually, McDonough Brothers became an agency which could provide underworld operators protection from arrest as well as protection after arrest. McDonough used his bail bond connections in the police department to expand into the "protection" business. However, evidence of McDonough's growing influence eventually seeped into the press. Gambling clubs operated by a "McDonough lieutenant" apparently paid police for "immunity from molestation."³³

The principal characters in the McDonough's 1923 bootlegging investigation: from left in the foreground, Pete, Tom, nephew Harry Rice, Maurice O'Callaghan, Jr., who testified against the Brothers, and Frank Sarrasseque, the bootlegger who unwittingly brought about the hearing.



Prostitutes contributed 10 percent of their income to the McDonoughs and “as long as they paid they had immunity from arrest.”³⁴ A grand jury found that McDonough Brothers’ power had grown to the point of being a virtual licensing agency: “No one can conduct a prostitution or gambling enterprise in San Francisco without approval direct or indirect of the McDonough Brothers.”³⁵ Prohibition brought new opportunities, as the McDonough organization gained control of appointment of local enforcement agents and, according to the state director of prohibition, Samuel Rutter, “cleaned up in the neighborhood of \$600,000” in the process.³⁶ So pervasive was the organization’s influence that attorney “Jake” Ehrlich, who often fought the Brothers’ attempts to gain control of the city’s legal

profession, believed that “Tammany never ran New York City as completely as the McDonoughs ran the right to break the law in San Francisco.”³⁷

So complete was McDonough’s dominance of the San Francisco underworld that his one conviction—in 1923 for bootlegging—produced one of the most remarkable documents in the city’s political history. Pete, Brother Tom, and Nephew Harry Rice had been arrested on April 25, 1923, when federal prohibition agents purchased two drinks at “The Corner” bar and five gallons of liquor from Rice’s garage.³⁸ Being “the biggest prohibition coup on the Pacific Coast,” the event caused prosecutor Kenneth M. Green, who obtained a conviction, to gloat, “At last McDonough is up against a prosecution he can’t corrupt.”³⁹ When McDonough

On election days, McDonough rounded up a gang of derelicts, offered each half a dollar bill before he voted, and presented him with the other half when he left the polls.

was sentenced to eighteen months in jail and a \$1,500 fine, many observers predicted that McDonough was finished.⁴⁰ As Mark Twain might have observed, however, reports of the king's death proved greatly exaggerated. When a series of appeals reaching all the way to the US Supreme Court failed, McDonough's attorney Marshall B. Woodworth announced, "The only hope left is an appeal for executive clemency." The resulting petition requesting a pardon for Pete McDonough presented to President Calvin Coolidge by Woodworth and former California Governor James N. Gillett was signed by an impressive list of San Francisco politicians, including the former governor, the secretary of state, Mayor James Rolph, three congressmen, one police commissioner, one judge of the appellate court, eleven superior court judges, two justices of the peace, four police judges, the city clerk, auditor, recorder, coroner, treasurer, tax collector, district attorney, three assistant district attorneys, and the vice-president of the Bank of Italy.⁴¹ Although even this distinguished group could not keep McDonough out of jail, it indicated that McDonough's eight-month sentence would not seriously interfere with his influence in San Francisco.

Only the uninitiated were surprised at the extent of Pete McDonough's support among politicians; seasoned observers recognized him as the "most powerful political influence" in San Francisco.⁴² The *Bulletin* believed that this influence was rooted in "a common rule of humanity: 'You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'."⁴³ Certainly over the years McDonough became an expert back-scratcher. He first gained influence as a member of

the saloonmen's Knights of the Royal Arch, a lodge-like group which was "extremely political in nature."⁴⁴ Like many saloon-keepers, McDonough became an expert at "voting winos." On election days in the early years, he rounded up a gang of derelicts, offered each half a dollar bill before he voted, and presented him with the other half when he left the polls.⁴⁵

Pete McDonough's buying of votes became more sophisticated by the late 1920s. In 1927 sheriff and long-time San Francisco political boss Tom Finn charged that McDonough had bet \$7,500 at odds of 1-3 against him, made-up 3,000 tickets at \$2.50-pays-\$10, and ordered his men to go "around town giving these tickets away. 'Vote for Fitzgerald [Finn's opponent] and here's \$10 for you' is what McDonough's henchmen are saying. Three thousand tickets means three thousand paid workers against me," pouted Finn.⁴⁶ Whether the charges were true or not, Fitzgerald staged a major upset in defeating Finn, and McDonough smiled knowingly in the background.

Pete McDonough was a valuable political ally because in the somewhat seamy world of San Francisco politics, as a national investigative commission observed, "The main contributions which make successful campaigns possible come from habitués of vice, gambling, and bootlegging resorts."⁴⁷ McDonough Brothers, noted attorney Jake Ehrlich, "performed vital functions at election time, and they served as fiduciary agents for statesmen too high up to stoop to face-to-face collections."⁴⁸ Exposés by the press charged that McDonough collected campaign funds to aid local and state politicians from the Ruef-Schmitz turn-of-the-century era through Angelo Rossi's pre-World War II administration.⁴⁹ The exact nature of arrangements varied, but the normal method was illustrated by a report in the *Bulletin* in 1910. A meeting between Mayor P. H. McCarthy's executive secretary, Elmore Leffingwell, and a "McDonough lieutenant," professional gambler Frank Daroux, was arranged at a French restaurant called the

Chantilly. By the conclusion of the meeting, Daroux was given permission to open two gambling clubs without police interference in exchange for a percentage of the revenue to wipe out a \$12,000 deficit incurred in McCarthy's 1909 campaign.⁵⁰

Not all of McDonough's power came through illegitimate deals. He also held political influence with a major voting bloc—organized labor. McDonough provided numerous bonds for union men who ran afoul of the law, and he was particularly generous in providing bail without charge to union men arrested during strikes. McDonough once said that his most prized possession was an ornately framed parchment with a gold seal which was presented to him by the carmen's union during the 1907-1908 streetcar strike. It read in part, "During the strike a great many union men went to jail. If it had not been for the McDonough Brothers many of the men might have been deprived unjustly of liberty. The McDonoughs rendered every possible service to our cause."⁵¹

Pete McDonough was also a frequent contributor to labor candidates' campaigns for public office.⁵² Accordingly, organized labor did not fail to show its gratitude when McDonough himself was in trouble. When he faced a bribery charge in 1920, the Building Trades Council passed a resolution stating, "The attacks on . . . Peter McDonough are being directed by certain enemies of labor."⁵³ The Metal Trades Council passed a similar resolution.⁵⁴ During the effort to secure a presidential pardon after McDonough's bootlegging conviction, the San Francisco Labor Council issued a statement supporting the pardon and calling McDonough "at all times a valuable and consistent friend of organized labor."⁵⁵

Pete McDonough's political muscle was often decisive

in elections, and it behooved local politicians to remain in his good graces. As a consequence, McDonough was able to crush most of his competition in the bail bond business, operate an extensive bootlegging empire, and preside over a network of "almost wide-open gambling and prostitution" without serious concern about local interference.⁵⁶ (His single conviction had resulted from a federal prosecution.) McDonough simply did not need to threaten anyone. He did not even need to ask anyone to help him. As demonstrated by the outpouring of support among local politicians for McDonough's petition of pardon, prospective candidates were only too happy to help out a major campaign supporter.

Beyond this relationship between McDonough and many figures in municipal government, the bail bondsman held a more sinister kind of power. The 1937 Atherton Investigation report charged that a police commissioner was "one of the mediums through which Peter P. McDonough exercised an important influence in department matters."⁵⁷ Within a week of the charge, the commissioner admitted that McDonough held his personal promissory note for \$20,000.⁵⁸ Shortly thereafter inquiries about the long friendship between McDonough and District Attorney Matthew Brady produced evidence that Brady owed McDonough \$1,100. Both men denied that the debts had influenced their conduct as public officials, but Brady admitted that if McDonough "can't get his clutches on a public official by buying him outright, he'll use any other means possible."⁵⁹ Whatever his tactics, by the mid-1930s Pete McDonough had become the "grand old man" of the San Francisco underworld.

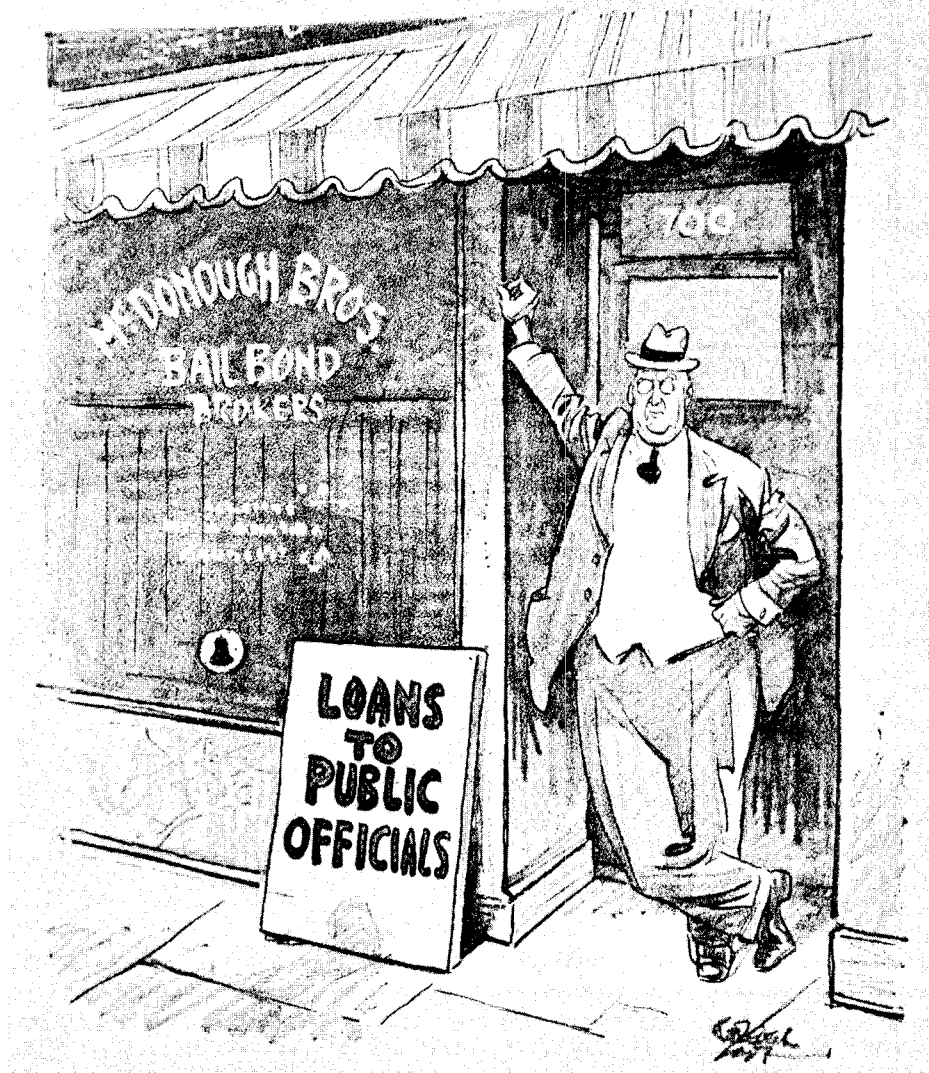
The one variable of civic importance which McDonough could not control was the city's economy, and the most important reason for the city's tolerance of McDonough and his activities was the general affluence of the decades after the earthquake and fire. The hard times of the 1930s, however, shook the city out of its lethargy and helped conclude Pete McDonough's long



career. Economic collapse followed by massive unemployment and poverty were met by political leaders incapable of dealing with the problems. As the depression deepened, growing anxiety, fear, and hatred produced violence throughout the state. The Salinas and San Joaquin valleys erupted at the urgings of the communist Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union. The possibility that Upton Sinclair's radical EPIC (End Poverty in California) campaign might capture the Governor's Mansion in the 1934 election caused equal panic among many citizens. But the most dramatic evidence of the system's inability to cope with the economic

crisis of the 1930s came during the 1934 waterfront and general strikes. The shooting of strikers and the arrival of the national guard in the city signaled the collapse of familiar social, economic, and political relationships which had sustained the city for over two decades.

The leaders of the old order who had so long supported Pete McDonough found themselves discredited, and, in many cases, abandoned. Nationally, organized labor experienced a revolution leading to the formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Harry Bridges' longshore and general strikes had been carried out at the expense not only of the shippers but of the



American Federation of Labor leadership of the Building and Metal Trades councils which had traditionally dominated San Francisco's labor politics. The increase in union membership which resulted from the 1934 strikes stirred new directions in the city's labor movement. Politically, this shift manifested itself in the rebirth of the state and local Democratic party. While organizers of Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1932 presidential campaign had been hard pressed to find a group of distinguished Democrats to greet the candidate when he visited San Francisco,⁶⁰ by 1938 a majority of the city's voters supported Culbert Olson, helping to make him

the first Democratic governor of California in the twentieth century. By the mid-thirties the leaders of the old order found themselves fighting for their political lives.

It was in this context that the investigation which ended Pete McDonough's reign as political boss of the San Francisco underworld was launched. In 1935, a former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent, Edwin N. Atherton, was brought to San Francisco to investigate the city's police department after an Internal Revenue Service collector announced that a police captain had been assessed back taxes because "he had built up a fortune, presumably in part, from payoffs from houses

of vice.”⁶¹ Atherton’s subsequent investigation specifically named sixty-seven police officers and twenty-four city, state, and federal officials. Most significantly, Atherton reported that “McDonough Brothers was found to be a fountainhead of corruption willing to interest itself in almost any matter designed to defeat or circumvent the law.”⁶² These charges produced spectacular headlines, but few thought the information new. Editorializing that “Atherton repeats rumors current here for ten to twenty years,”⁶³ the *Examiner* pointed out that McDonough’s activity “has been going on for thirty years.”⁶⁴ Certainly Pete McDonough was a past master at weathering such storms.

But this crisis was different. This time the *Examiner*’s demand to “Smash Pete McDonough!” was not only heard but acted upon.⁶⁵ Local politicians who in the past had rallied to McDonough’s support hung back; the city’s new political climate had them fighting for their political survival, and they “certainly could not be left holding the bag” for an unpopular cause.⁶⁶ The depression had changed the attitude of the previously tolerant citizenry, which seemed to one observer to have “gotten religion.”⁶⁷ Figures such as \$1 million in police graft and \$4–\$5 million a year in vice payments shocked people who were individually facing economic oblivion. What had been calmly accepted for a generation suddenly produced public outrage, and no public official with any instinct for survival dared step in the path of the investigation’s juggernaut. In November, 1937, it finally rolled over Pete McDonough when the state’s insurance commissioner stripped him of his bail bond license.⁶⁸

Pete McDonough’s career was at an end. Spending the remaining years of his life trying to regain his license, he was able to secure a parade of notable San Franciscans as character witnesses at a series of insurance commission hearings, including Edmund G. Brown, Mayor Roger Lapham, future Mayor George Christopher, Atherton Grand Jury Foreman Marshall Dill, and Police Chiefs

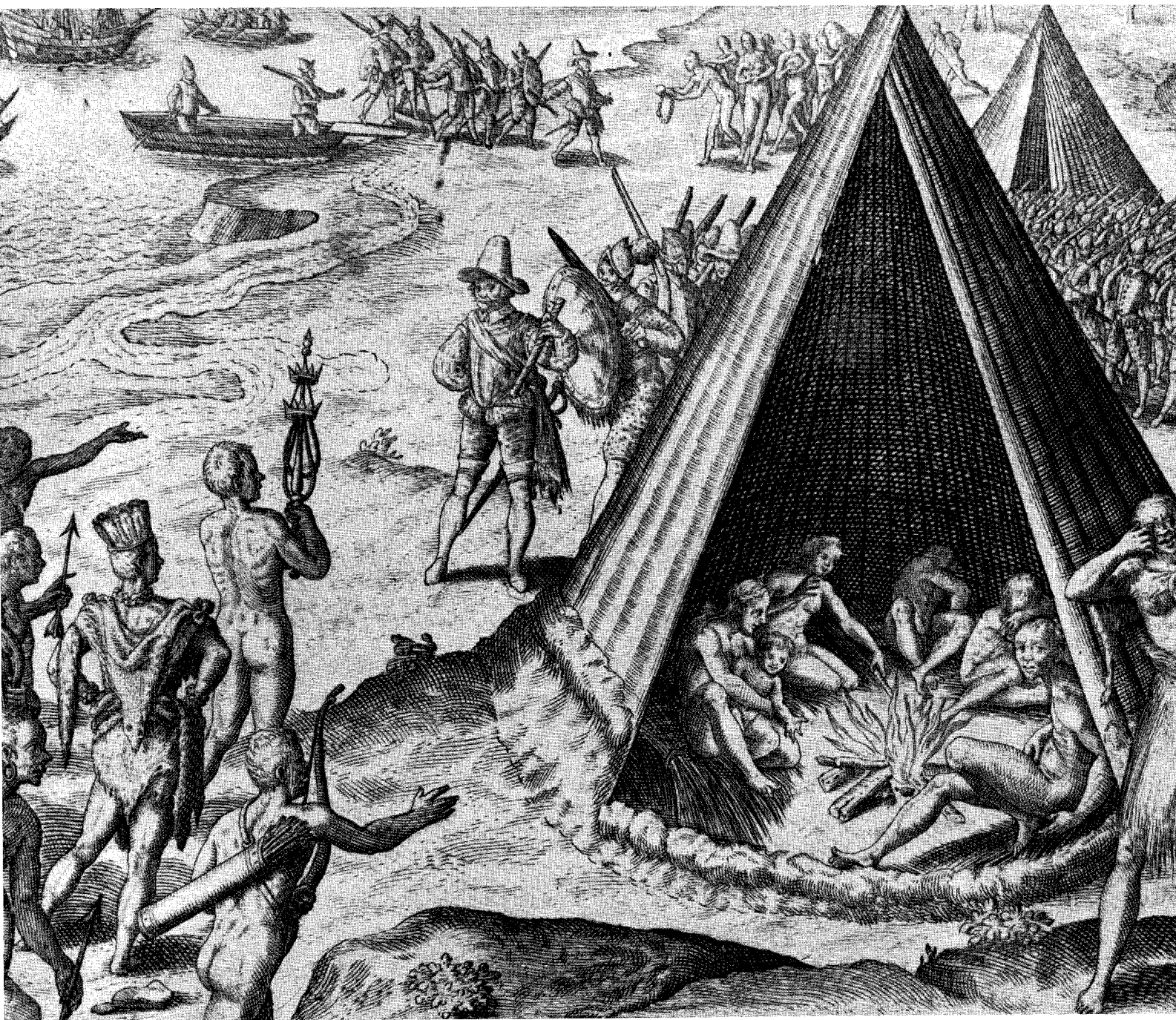
William Quinn, Charles Dullea, and Michael Gaffey. Their testimony at one hearing caused Insurance Commissioner Anthony Caminetti to remark, “If you precede me to the pearly gates, Mr. McDonough, will you say a good word for me?”⁷⁰ But the commission never renewed McDonough’s license, and he never regained the incredible power over the city’s life he had wielded for a quarter-century.

The photograph of the bail bond office is courtesy the *San Francisco Examiner*, October 17, 1947; the bootlegging investigation drawing is from the *Examiner*, May 5, 1923. The cartoons are from the *San Francisco News*, March 20 and 30, 1937.

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18. John O'Brien, "Frisco's Most Historic Saloon," *Pacific Wine and Spirits Review*, July 31, 1901, p. 22.
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27. Interview with John Brooke, December 8, 1977.
28. *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 27, 1907.
29. *San Francisco Bulletin*, October 26, 1909, December 9, 1910.
30. *San Francisco Bulletin*, November 23, 1918.
31. *San Francisco Bulletin*, November 1, 1927.
32. *San Francisco Call*, May 5, 1923.
33. *San Francisco Bulletin*, January 28, 1911, February 4, 1911.
34. *San Francisco Bulletin*, February 7, 1919; Fremont Older, *My Own Story* (New York: McMillan and Company, 1926), p. 301.
35. San Francisco grand jury, quoted in Stanton Delaplane, "Pete McDonough," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 10, 1947.
36. *The Liberator*, June, 1923, quoted in Elizabeth Anne Brown *The Enforcement of Prohibition in San Francisco, California* (unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of California, Berkeley, 1948), p. 17; Samuel Rutter, quoted in the *San Francisco Call*, April 25, 1923.
37. Erlich, *A Life in My Hands*, 87.
38. *San Francisco Call*, April 25, 1923.
39. *San Francisco Call*, April 25, May 15, 1923.
40. *San Francisco News*, April 15, 1923.
41. *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 23, 1924.
42. Editorial, *San Francisco Call*, November 26, 1924.
43. Editorial, *San Francisco Bulletin*, November 27, 1918.
44. Arthur H. Samish and Bob Thomas, *The Secret Boss of California: The Life and High Times of Art Samish* (New York: Crown Publishers Incorporated, 1971), p. 23.
45. Interview with Harvey Wing, February 27, 1978.
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48. Ehrlich, *A Life in My Hands*, 88.
49. *San Francisco Bulletin*, October 26, 1909, June 9, 1911; *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 31, 1936; *San Francisco Observer*, January 29, 1916; Robert E. Burke, *Olson's New Deal for California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953), p. 25.
50. *San Francisco Bulletin*, June 9, 1911.
51. *San Francisco News*, March 17, 1937.
52. Interview with Harvey Wing, February 27, 1978.
53. *San Francisco Call*, May 14, 1920.
54. *San Francisco Call*, May 18, 1920.
55. *San Francisco Call*, December 6, 1924.
56. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 31, 1955.
57. "The Atherton Graft Report," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 17, 1937.
58. *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 18, 1937.
59. *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 26, 1937.
60. Interview with Harvey Wing, February 27, 1978.
61. *San Francisco Chronicle*, August 29, 1935.
62. *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 17, 1937.
63. *San Francisco Examiner*, March 18, 1937.
64. *San Francisco Examiner*, August 26, 1936.
65. *San Francisco Examiner*, May 24, 1937; Marshall Dill to Superior Court Judge James D. Conlan, July 13, 1937, Dill Papers.
66. Charles Raudebaugh, "San Francisco: The Bedlam Dozes On," in Robert S. Allen, editor, *Our Fair City* (New York: The Vanguard Press, Incorporated, 1947), p. 350.
67. Interview with John Brooke, December 8, 1977.
68. *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 10, 1937; Marshall Dill to Insurance Commissioner Samuel L. Carpenter, July, 1937, Dill Papers.
69. *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 12, 15, and 16, 1946.
70. Delaplane, "Pete McDonough," in *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 10, 1947.



LEGEND OF THE NICASIOS

the men Drake left behind at Nova Albion

When historian J. P. Munro-Fraser published his *History of Marin County* in 1880, he offered several reasons for believing that explorer and circumnavigator Francis Drake had landed in the ocean bay that bears his name. Among them, he wrote, was “an old Indian legend to the effect that Drake did land at this place, where some of his men deserted him, made their way into the country,” and became “amalgamated with the aboriginals.” This “tradition among the people with whom he met while here” is important because it provides a confirmation from Indian sources of a story which is implicit in several early European accounts. It suggests that there was a substantial discrepancy between the number of men who camped on the California coast at Nova Albion with Drake in June, 1579, and the number who departed with him for the East Indies a few weeks later.¹

In the century following publication of the legend, it has been the subject of comment by several writers concerned with Drake's sojourn in California. In 1890 George Davidson was the first to mention it as evidence supporting his theory of a Drakes Bay anchorage. Other scholars, however, rejected it as having little evidentiary value. Among the notable critics were John W. Robertson, Henry R. Wagner, and Robert F. Heizer.²

On the other hand, although Wagner commented that this Indian legend could not represent “evidence of any value,” he was nevertheless impelled to mention the “likelihood” that some of Drake's men had deserted him at Nova Albion and, further, that “it seems certain that at least ten men had disappeared after the ship left Guatulco” in Mexico and before reaching its next stop after leaving California.³ Similarly, Raymond Aker's 1971 work dealing with Drake in California reports the “extremely curious discrepancy in the number of

Theodore de Bry's fanciful 1599 engraving (left) shows Drake's party pulling ashore (background) and being warmly greeted by curious natives, probably Coast Miwoks.

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What became of these people—a dozen or more—who traveled to California with Drake in June, 1579, but apparently did not leave with him . . . in July?

persons comprising Drake's company when he was last seen on the coast of Mexico and when the company was again recorded in the East Indies." Aker then proceeded to discuss the question of "what happened to those twenty or so people."⁴

Certainly Drake's journey through the North Pacific marked a turning point in his three-year voyage of plunder and exploration. When he reached the small port of Guatulco, one hundred miles south of Acapulco along the coast of Oaxaca, Mexico, he was at the midway point of his epic voyage in time and distance. He had completed the predatory phases of the long journey, and he was to capture no more ships, pillage no more settlements, take no more captives. It was time to turn his attention to the problem of finding his way back to England with his ship and its treasure intact.

The Spanish sailing instructions which he had captured informed him that the impending typhoon season made it too late to head across the Pacific to the East Indies. On the other hand, he dared not return by the way he had come because of the probability that the men of Spain, now fully alerted to his presence in the Pacific, would be lying in wait at South America's Straits of Magellan (as indeed they were). Finally, Drake's leaking ship was in need of repair. Weighing these factors, he thus charted a new course designed to bring him to the western entrance of the fabled Northwest Passage, if that waterway did exist, with an opportunity to repair the ship and rest his men somewhere en route.

As it turned out, unfavorable weather conditions off

the coast of what is now Oregon caused Drake to discontinue the search for the Northwest Passage and to seek a haven for the repair of his ship in what was described by a contemporary account⁵ as a "fit and convenient harbor" somewhere in Northern California. Modern scholars have determined the site of his visit to have been in the region inhabited by the Coast Miwok Indians, that is, in one of the harbors along the perimeter of the Marin peninsula.⁶ It is here that we join Drake, for it is at this harbor, it seems clear, that Drake's crew was strangely diminished.

The mysterious discrepancy in the size of Drake's crew is a subject that excites curiosity concerning its every aspect: what is the basis for believing that men were, in fact, left behind; how many were left; what were the reasons for their leaving the expedition, or being left; and what is the evidence, beyond the legend itself, to support this interesting explanation of their ultimate fate.

Anxious to end the English pirateering, the Spanish authorities took depositions from all Spanish citizens who had any contact with the dreaded Englishman Drake in the course of his voyage along the west coast of the Americas. They did likewise with Drake's cousin John, following his capture in Argentina in 1582, and also with Nuño da Silva, Drake's captured Portuguese pilot. One of the usual questions asked of the captives was how many men Drake had with him. The reported answers ranged from seventy-one or seventy-two, figures based on an actual count made surreptitiously by a captive named Nicolás Jorje, to eighty-six or eighty-seven, estimates that may have included three ship boys and two captive blacks.⁷

Despite the fact that most of the erstwhile prisoners placed the number of Drake's men before leaving Guatulco at eighty or more, circumstances suggest that these estimates were high.⁸ Jorje's figures, the most conservative and the only ones produced from an actual count, are therefore taken as the best basis for compari-

son. For the numbers reported after the crew had left Nova Albion, there are two known figures—the first contained in a deposition by John Drake and giving the number as sixty,⁹ the second from Drake's *The World Encompassed* and placing the number at fifty-eight. Comparing *The World Encompassed*'s figure with the earlier count of seventy-one or seventy-two, there remains a discrepancy of thirteen or fourteen people to be accounted for, exclusive of the black captives who were put ashore on an island in the East Indies.¹⁰

This startling information gives rise to several questions: what became of these people—a dozen or more—who traveled to California with Drake in June, 1579, but apparently did not leave with him when the *Golden Hind* departed for the Moluccas in July? Secondly, why did the various contemporary accounts neither explain or mention this substantial discrepancy?

To answer the second of these two queries, one can only speculate that if the men who failed to depart from Nova Albion on the *Golden Hind* were deserters, Drake would not have wanted that fact to be admitted or become known. If the men were left by some agreement, their position in Spanish America would have made them vulnerable to enemy attack if information as to their whereabouts was permitted to be published or to leak out.

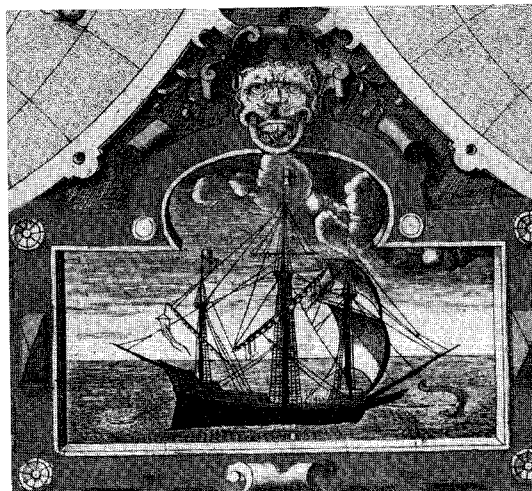
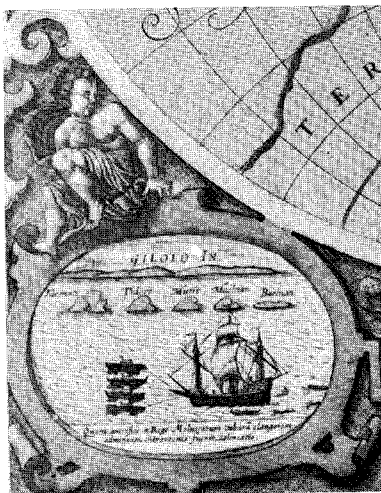
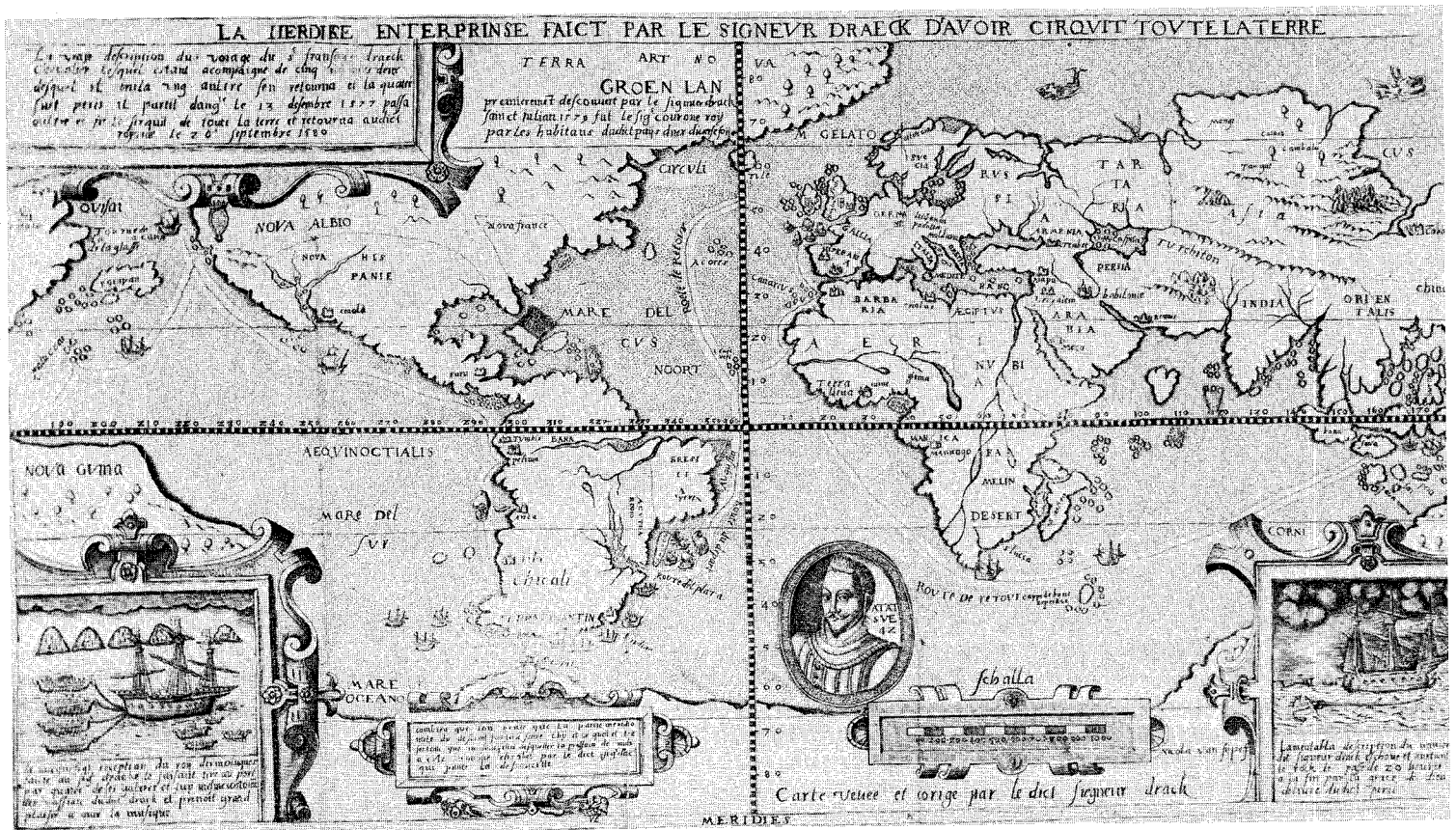
The first question—what became of the dozen or more people who came to Nova Albion but did not leave with Drake—is a broader one, requiring a greater latitude of imagination to suggest answers. Perhaps, we may guess, malcontented crew members deserted Drake. The possibility of dissension or mutiny was an ever-present hazard on lengthy early voyages, and Ferdinand Magellan also had to deal with the problem in the first circumnavigation. Drake himself was known to have

had his difficulties, first with the mutinous Thomas Doughty and later with the deserter John Winter, captain of Drake's second ship, the *Elizabeth*. Even the Spanish coast explorer Sebastian Cermeño was threatened with revolt from the time he first sighted the Pacific Coast in November, 1595.¹¹

Another possible explanation for fewer crew members would be that some voluntarily remained behind. They might have done so because of (a) lack of space on the *Golden Hind* (two ships were needed on the last leg of the journey to California);¹² (b) unwillingness to risk the perils of the long Pacific voyage in a frail and heavily laden ship; (c) a bribe by Drake to remain for a time with the small frigate they had captured and some silver or other valuable cargo; and even (d) seemingly hopeless illness.

It is perhaps difficult, four hundred years after the event, to imagine any Drake crewman willingly remaining on that bleak and lonely coast or bay, no matter how friendly and worshipful the Indians may have seemed. On the other hand, it is not difficult to visualize the terror the men may have felt at the prospect of faring forth into the wild and unknown Pacific in such a frail and overcrowded vessel as the *Golden Hind*. Drake could give no assurance that the boat's leaky condition would not recur at any time or longitude and bring death to all aboard. Today we can only speculate about the crewmen's motivation, or about the promises which may have been made in consideration of their remaining at Nova Albion.

There is fairly dependable evidence to indicate that at least one member of the Drake party, Pilot N. de Morena, stayed behind at his own request after pleading desperate illness and then staged a miraculous recovery and made his way to Mexico on foot.¹³ Others may have undertaken a similar course of action but perished, or reached civilization without having their return recorded. Or they may have tried to sail the small second ship back to some friendly harbor, but without success.



This Dutch map (above) shows the route of Drake's voyage of circumnavigation. It is based on the 1589 map by Jodocus Hondius titled, "Vera Totius Expeditionis Nauticae." The detail (left) from the Hondius map features two drawings of the Golden Hind and its even smaller satellite vessels on which were crowded some 164 people.

After the Nicasio legend had first been published by Munro-Fraser, its next mention occurred a decade later when George Davidson, in his first treatise dealing with Drake in California, included a paraphrased version of only part of it:

Among the Nicasio Indians of the Nicasio Valley, which lies fifteen miles to the eastward of Drake's Bay, there is said to have been a tradition to the effect that Drake anchored in the Bay, and landed on these shores; that some of his crew deserted and lived among the Indians; and that he gave the natives some seeds for planting; and among other things some hard ship-biscuit which they innocently planted in the hope of similar bread growing therefrom.¹⁴

This abbreviated version of the legend suited Davidson's purposes since it not only placed the *Golden Hind* in Drakes Bay, but also enabled Davidson to argue against a San Francisco Bay anchorage on the ground that from the latter location Drake would have had no contact with the Indians living in Nicasio.¹⁵ However, from Munro-Fraser, the source of Davidson's information, comes the following, more complete story:

The Indians also state that some of Drake's men deserted him here, and making their way into the country, became amalgamated with the aboriginals to such an extent that all traces of them were lost, except possibly a few names which are to be found among the Indians. "Winnemucca," for instance, is a purely Celtic word, and the name "Nicasio," "Novato," and others are counterparts, with slight variations, of names and places on the island of Cyprus.¹⁶

Although the Nicasio legend as a whole was given little credence by scholars, including Wagner and Heizer, its reference to some of Drake's men remaining behind meshes with another more reliable story from the Juan Crespi expedition, which explored the San Francisco Bay Area in March, 1772. While doing research in Mexico, Wagner located a map of the Bay Area drawn from the diary and field notes of Father Crespi. The map's inscription, according to John Robertson, noted: "Around this bay the natives were found to be red-

Bearded and fair-skinned natives had been reliably reported as having been encountered around San Francisco Bay by Crespi in 1772.

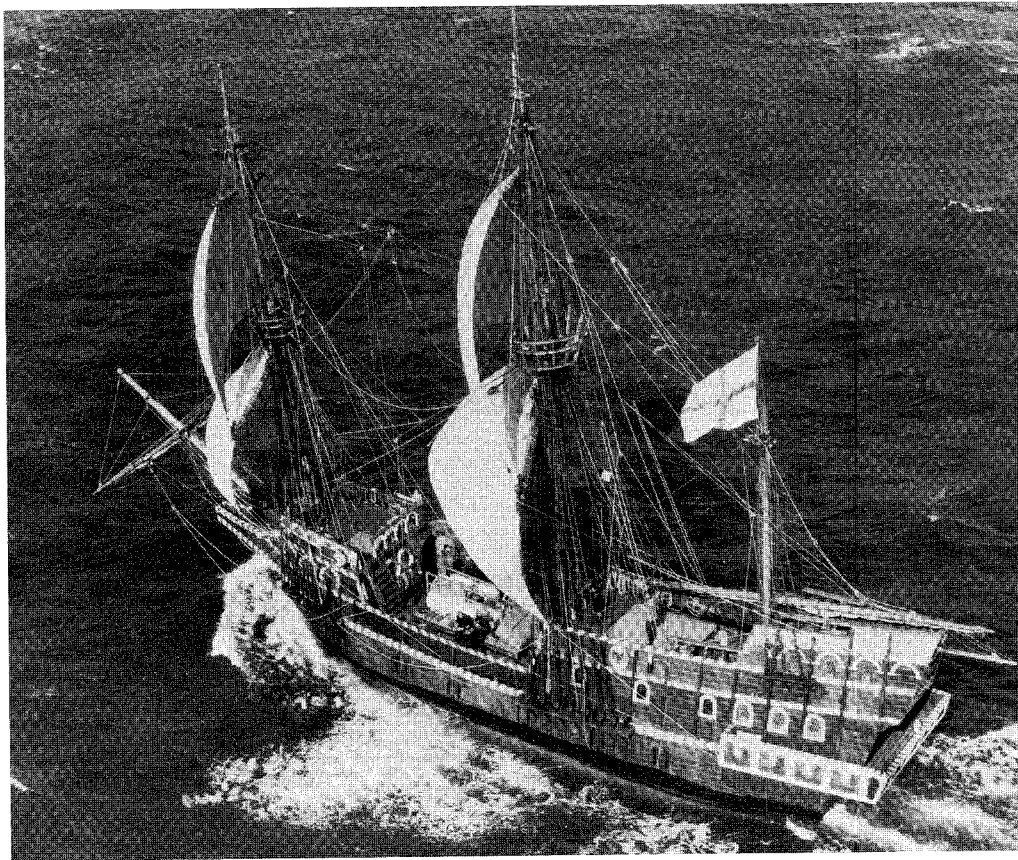
headed, bearded and fair complectioned. They were very good and friendly, and they made gifts of fruit and food to the Spaniards."¹⁷ Evaluating this information in his treatise on Drake, Robertson reported:

The bearded, reddish-haired and fair-skinned (*barbados, rubios y blancos*) Indians that they found on this bay shore would be an excellent argument for those putting faith in Indian legends of the White Gods who visited them, had they been found in the bays near Point Reyes or in the port of Trinidad, even though 200 years and many Spanish sailors had intervened.¹⁸

Robertson appears to have been the only Drake scholar to print the Crespi map and information. He commented skeptically on its value in relation to the Nicasio legend, which he discussed in some depth, and he emphasized what he believed were inconsistencies on the subject of the Drake crew members. For all his diligence, however, Robertson made two errors in his discussion of the subject. He mistranslated "*rubios*" as "red-haired" rather than "blond," and the phrase "*rubios, blancos y barbados*" therefore means "blond, fair-skinned (or white) and bearded." Secondly, instead of verifying what Munro-Fraser had said, Robertson merely repeated Davidson's inadequate synopsis of the legend and proceeded to base his own comments on these faulty premises.¹⁹

Despite his mistranslation of the word *rubios*, Robertson was certainly aware that bearded and fair-skinned natives had been reliably reported as having been encountered around San Francisco Bay by Crespi in 1772.

Overcrowding of the crew became a severe problem when two of Drake's ships became unseaworthy. The Golden Hind, a replica of which is shown here, carried treasure as well as supplies for the long voyage across the Pacific.



Consequently, it would seem that Robertson had been deserted by his usually logical mind when he ruled out any possibility of a valid basis for the Nicasio legend. In any event, his reasoning on the subject is so palpably erroneous as to invite the following point-by-point critical analysis.

(1) Robertson asserted that the Indians, whom he called "ignorant and unlettered troglodytes," could not have passed the name of Drake down through eight generations.²⁰ Such an assertion was obviously based on the assumption that no crew members were left behind, and that "Drake" was therefore a word unlikely to have survived the passage of time among a primitive tribe which had heard it only briefly in 1579. Such a conclusion, however, lacks validity if fifteen or twenty crew members had remained in California, had joined the tribe, and had continued (as would have been natural) to hand down the name of Drake by word of mouth through succeeding generations of their offspring.

(2) Robertson also claimed that the Indians could not have differentiated between Drake's sailors and those of the explorer Cermeño, or other sailors who occasionally stopped at Bodega or Drakes Bay.²¹ But no such dif-

ferentiation would have been necessary. The hostility of the Indians encountered by Cermeño in 1595 would have made amatory adventures unlikely and desertion unattractive. Northern California went unvisited by Europeans during all the years between 1595 and 1740 to 1750, the years when the fair-skinned adults seen in 1772 by Crespi were probably born. Robertson's assumption that other sailors stopped at Bodega or Drakes Bay during that lengthy interval was an erroneous one.

(3) Robertson reported that no ethnological evidence exists of white men having adventures with the "over-friendly and worshipping Indian women."²² On the contrary, such evidence was presented by Robertson himself in the form of the Crespi records. Moreover, the reference in those records to "the natives" encountered (rather than to "some of the natives" or to "an occasional native") suggests a substantial infusion of European blood into the tribe. This would be expected if a dozen deserters had "become amalgamated with the aboriginals," but not if only a few amatory adventures had occurred because of the briefness of the Drake and Cermeño sojourns.

(4) If there had been any desertion from the English crew, Robertson wrote, Drake's chaplain Francis Fletcher, who was "so verbose as to the minute incidents that happened between the sailors and the Indians, would have made some note of such an occurrence."²³ On the contrary, Fletcher, verbose though he may have been about some things, carefully avoided mention of anything that might reflect unfavorably upon the expedition. Such topics as Drake's black woman Maria, and the amatory adventures of the crew were certainly taboo to the straitlaced parson. Furthermore, Drake himself would have regarded desertion as defiance of his authority and would have forbidden mention of the subject in any official account.

(5) Robertson also wrote that if a group of Drake's sailors had deserted, mestizos, or persons of mixed European and American Indian ancestry, would have been encountered by later parties, and association with white men would have been evident in many ways.²⁴ But Robertson seemingly shut his eyes to the fact that mestizos were encountered, these being the bearded, fair-skinned natives that, according to Crespi, were kind to the Spaniards in 1772. Robertson was presumably unaware, too, that other early visitors to Northern California had reported contacts with blond Indians. The journal entry of Father Francisco Palou dated November 29, 1774, told of meeting, near what is now San Carlos on the San Francisco peninsula, a group of "well formed Indians of tall stature, many of them fair and well-bearded, as much so as any Spaniard." Four days later, in the vicinity of the present San Bruno, the Palou party was visited by another group of twenty-four Indians, "most of them bearded and some of them fair."²⁵

Had he become familiar with all of these references as well as the full text of the legend itself, even Robertson might have conceded that the reports support the Indian legend's reference to "amalgamation with the aboriginals."²⁶ The blond, bearded natives reported by Crespi and Palou were obviously mestizos. From the standpoint

of physical appearance and numbers encountered, the evidence suggests a substantial infusion of European blood into the tribe several generations earlier. It also suggests that an awareness of their heritage, intuitive or otherwise, may have been a factor in their attraction to the white strangers, as evidenced by their seeking out of the Spaniards and their friendly gifts of food and fruit.

Of the 164 people who left Plymouth, England, with Drake in December, 1577, under the illusion that they were embarking on a voyage of relatively moderate duration and peril, scarcely more than 100 were ever to see England again.²⁷ The captain and crew of Drake's *Marigold*, 29 in all, perished in a storm near the Straits of Magellan in September, 1578. Men numbering 7 succumbed to enemy action, 7 to hardships and privation, 2 to illness, and 1 to the executioner's ax. Another 3 made it back to civilization on their own, accounting for a total of 49 who did not return to England with Drake or on the *Elizabeth* with Captain Winter.²⁸

The 71 or 72 people on the *Golden Hind* in the spring of 1579 (reflecting the count made by the prisoner Jorje), added to the 49 enumerated above, would account for 120 or 121 of the original company of 164, and thus leave 43 or 44 as the number returning on the smaller *Elizabeth*. With all the factors of the equation thus identified and evaluated, we need only to combine the *Elizabeth's* contingent (43 or 44) with the number returning on the *Golden Hind* (58) and those returning to civilization on their own or not at all (49) to realize from the resulting total of 150 or 151 that 13 or 14 of the original 164 men are still unaccounted for. This confirms our earlier and simpler computation (Jorge's 71 or 72 minus *The World Encompassed's* 58).

The consistency of the foregoing figures suggests the need for study of other evidence pertinent to the fate of

*The first indication that a problem existed
... was Drake's otherwise inexplicable
ordering of eight men into a small open boat.*

Drake's crew members. It has not been generally realized that Drake's vessel was severely overcrowded—a problem that was to trouble him much of the time in the Pacific. On five different occasions while in the great ocean he banished an individual or group from the *Golden Hind* to the relative insecurity of a smaller satellite vessel, or left them behind in an alien environment, and not until he reached the Celebes area did he rid himself fully of the problem.²⁹

The nagging difficulty resulting from overcrowding had its inception in 1578 when two of Drake's ships became unseaworthy and had to be broken up or abandoned. Their crews were redistributed among the other three ships, the majority of these displaced seamen probably being reassigned to the *Golden Hind*, the largest of the three vessels.³⁰ Although Drake himself was thus responsible for adding a substantial number of men to the already full crew of his ship, he may not then have appreciated the extent of the problem that he had created for himself, or have had any idea that within little more than a year he might be reducing the number of those on board by twenty persons or more.

The first indication that a problem existed, so far as the early accounts were concerned, was Drake's otherwise inexplicable ordering of eight of his men into a small open boat "to waite upon the ship for all necessary uses." Soon after this event in October, 1578, "foule weather suddenly arising" caused the men to lose sight of the *Golden Hind*, and they were never reunited.³¹ Despite this tragedy and the loss of more lives in enemy action along the Chilean coast, a substantial human over-

load continued, aggravated by the taking aboard of several captives and the acquisition of a heavy cargo of gold, silver, and other Spanish loot.

It was not until Drake reached Central America that another opportunity to provide relief from the crowded conditions on the *Golden Hind* presented itself. In March, 1579, a small Spanish frigate engaged in coastwise service and not designed for long ocean voyages was taken from one Rodrigo Tello near the island of Caño. The mere fact that Drake pressed into service a ship with an estimated capacity of fourteen persons for a sixty-day voyage in the wake of the *Golden Hind* makes it obvious that he felt it necessary to reduce the number on board forthwith—even if only temporarily. Manning the frigate with members of the *Hind*'s crew, Drake then directed the two ships on the 4,000-mile voyage that was to bring them to California. Viewed realistically, Drake's bold action would solve the overcrowding problem: temporarily, if the small frigate miraculously survived the rigorous voyage, and permanently, if it did not.

The frigate, we know, did reach California and went no further, but a variety of questions beg to be answered. If the capacity of an additional ship was required for the shorter Mexico-to-California trip, how could the *Golden Hind* alone accommodate not only all the people but all the food, water, and supplies required for the long transpacific voyage? Was it mere coincidence that the frigate's carrying capacity—about fourteen—corresponded closely with the number of men unaccounted for after Drake had left Nova Albion? Could it have been that Drake consciously manned the second vessel with the members of his crew that could best be spared in the event the small boat failed to survive? Or that such a selection would have served the same purpose if the frigate would reach California and a reduction of personnel would then have to be made? If the frigate's crew, or others, were the ones who volunteered or were ordered to remain in California, were they influenced



Drake unhesitatingly ordered men into an open boat on the ocean, put ashore his pilot in Mexico, and abandoned captives on a waterless island. This portrait of the captain-pirate is attributed to Jodocus Hondius.

by promises from Drake of a special share of the captured treasure, and that he would return for them on his next voyage? Was Drake so ruthless that he deliberately abandoned a dozen or more of his crew halfway around the world—with or without promises?

Firm answers to these questions are not available. However, evidence suggests that Drake would not have hesitated to leave some of his men at Nova Albion if he felt the success of the enterprise required it. It is likely that he would have acted with no more compunction than he had shown in ordering eight of his men into an open boat on the ocean, knowing that they might well be lost in the event of a storm (as they in fact were); with no more compassion than he had shown in putting ashore

in Mexico his Portuguese pilot, Nuño da Silva, knowing that it could mean torture or death by the Spaniards;³² and with no more mercy than he was later to show in abandoning three recently captured blacks, including a pregnant woman named Maria, on a remote and waterless island in the East Indies.³³

As for the legend of the Nicasios, the figures cited herein do not necessarily prove that there were a dozen or more Elizabethans who did not leave Nova Albion.³⁴ Nor do the reports of Crespi and Palou necessarily establish that England's first colony in the New World was actually on Pacific shores. The evidence, although persuasive, remains circumstantial. It can do no more than provide a plausible and fascinating basis for con-

jecture about how Drake may have finally solved his problem of shipboard crowding and what may have happened to those stay-behinds, if any, who did not find their way overland to Mexico, or sail away to a watery grave in the small ship we know Drake abandoned at Nova Albion.

The de Bry engraving is from *Americae, Pars VII* (Frankfurt, 1599). The Dutch map, drawn by Nicola van Henrike, appeared in *Le Voyage Curieux* . . . (1641). The Drake portrait was supplied by the author and the other photographs are from the CHS Collections.

Notes

1. J. P. Munro-Fraser, *History of Marin County* (San Francisco, 1880), pp. 96, 97, 98. On p. 96 Munro-Fraser speaks of "an old Indian legend which came down through the Nicasios." Alfred L. Kroeber's *Handbook of the California Indians* makes no reference to a tribe or sub-tribe by that name, and it must be assumed that Munro-Fraser was speaking of members of the Coast Miwok tribe living in the village of Nicasio. The sole source of the Nicasio legend is Munro-Fraser, and every writer's discussion of it relates back, directly or indirectly, to that source.
2. George Davidson, *Identification of Sir Francis Drake's Anchorage*... (San Francisco, 1890), p. 35; John Robertson, *Francis Drake and Other Early Explorers Along the Pacific Coast* (San Francisco, 1927), pp. 221, 222 and 226; Henry Wagner, *Sir Francis Drake's Voyage Around the World* (San Francisco, 1926), pp. 148, 167; Robert F. Heizer, *Elizabethan California* (Ramona, California, 1974), pp. 78-79.
3. Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, 148.
4. Raymond Aker, "Report of Findings Relating to the Identification of Sir Francis Drake's Encampment at Point Reyes National Seashore" (1971), cf. pp. 330-342.
5. *The World Encompassed by Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1628).
6. Heizer, *Elizabethan California*, p. 80. The Coast Miwok tribe's homeland comprises Marin County and the southern part of Sonoma County. The only harbor in Sonoma that might have served Drake as an anchorage was Bodega Bay, while Marin County had eight such bays or harbors.
7. Zelia Nuttall, *New Light on Drake* (London, 1914), pp. 137, 181, 186. Nicolas Jorje was a prisoner on the *Golden Hind* from February 5 to March 5, 1579. In addition to the two black men, a young black woman named Maria was subsequently made a captive.
8. If there were 86 or 87 men on board, having previously lost 5 to enemy action and 8 in an open boat in a storm in September, 1578, Drake would have had to have 100 on board the *Golden Hind* when it arrived in the Pacific, which is a physical impossibility. This reason, and the natural tendency of prisoners to exaggerate, suggests that such estimates cannot be made to jibe with the actual number of personnel of the three ships.
9. Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 32, 52. Nuttall mistakenly translated John Drake's first deposition to mean that Drake had lightened his ship in the Moluccas "by reducing their company to sixty men." Fortunately, Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, p. 181, corrected this error by pointing out that "all John Drake said was that they were only sixty in number" and that there was no "evidence that Drake left any men at Ternate." To the same effect as Wagner was the translation given by Lady Elliot-Drake in *The Family and Heirs of Sir Francis Drake* (London, 1911), 2: 357.
10. Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 32.
11. Drake Navigators Guild, "Nova Albion Rediscovered: Nautical Research Aids in the Identification of Francis Drake's Encampment" (Point Reyes, 1956), p. 15, states, "We may readily believe there was suppressed and even open discontent in the incongruous, closely packed company on his ship, only to be understood and appreciated by those who have made long sea voyages." Thomas Doughty, after being found guilty of fomenting mutiny among the crews, was beheaded by Drake's order at Port San Julian. Cermeño was captain of a Spanish ship, the *San Agustin*, which was assigned to explore the California coast for harbors for ships trading between the Philippines and Acapulco. While in the present Drakes Bay in November, 1595, the *San Agustin* was wrecked.
12. Drake captured a small vessel belonging to Rodrigo Tello on March 20, 1579. According to Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 184, it was necessary for Drake to strengthen the vessel to make it fit for a longer voyage.
13. The story of de Morena's adventures was reported in the February, 1900, issue of *Land of Sunshine*, XII:3.
14. Davidson, *Identification of Drake's Anchorage*, 35.
15. *Ibid.*, 57.
16. Munro-Fraser, *History of Marin County*, 97.
17. The map was reproduced in color in Robertson, *Francis Drake Along the Pacific Coast*, 255 ff.
18. *Ibid.*, 225.
19. *Ibid.*, 221.
20. *Ibid.*, 222.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, 226.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*
25. Frank M. Stanger and Alan K. Brown, *Who Discovered the Golden Gate?* (San Mateo, 1969), pp. 137, 141.
26. Robertson implied that the legend might have had credibility

if the blond natives seen by Crespi had been encountered near Point Reyes instead of around the Bay. In effect, one of his reasons for rejecting the legend was that the mestizos were encountered elsewhere than in certain parts of Marin County.

There are several possible answers to this view of the evidence:

- (1) The legend as reported by Munro-Fraser did not limit the area where Drake's crewmen finally came to rest as being near Point Reyes or Nicasio. It stated only that they made their way "into the country," which could have been anywhere on the Marin peninsula or in the Bay Area. (2) The straight-line distance from Nicasio to San Francisco is less than twenty-five miles, not too difficult a venture for the Drake crewmen and their offspring to have made in the course of two centuries. (3) Recent evidence suggests that the Costanoan Indians, who peopled the San Francisco area when the Spaniards first arrived, may also have occupied a part of the eastern shores of Marin County in pre-mission days, thus possibly accounting for the crewmen's descendants having moved to the Bay Area south of the Golden Gate where they were encountered by Palou. (4) What other way is there to explain the Crespi-Palou encounters? Apart from the Cermeño visit in 1595, no other white men are known to have set foot on Northern California soil prior to 1769. None of the Cermeño crew remained behind, and there is no other way to account for the mestizos seen by Crespi and Palou except on the basis of the legend of the Nicasios.
27. Derek Wilson, *The World Encompassed* (New York, 1977), p. 211, estimates that about half of the original complement of 164 on the voyage survived. This author's computation, however, as outlined herein, places the number of survivors at about 104.
28. N. M. Penzer, ed., *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents* (London, 1926), p. 139, indicates that Preacher Fletcher had reported the number lost on the *Marigold* at "28 soules," in addition to Captain Edward Bright.

Three men returned to civilization by themselves. John Fry was captured off the coast of Morocco but later returned to England. Peter Carder made his way over land and sea from the vicinity of the Straits of Magellan to England, arriving in 1586 (see Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, 83-84). Pilot de Morena traveled on foot from Nova Albion to Mexico, arriving there about 1583.

No record exists of the number or identity of the men who returned to England on the *Elizabeth* with Captain Winter. The deserter Winter had the distinction of being the first to negotiate the Straits of Magellan from west to east. According to John Drake, Winter was imprisoned for deserting Drake and would have been hung but for the latter's intercession (Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 27).

29. Eight men were ordered into an open boat in October, 1578; the pilot Nuño da Silva was put ashore at Guatulco; a dozen or more men were ordered to man Rodrigo Tello's captured frigate for the journey from Mexico to California; the pilot

N. de Morena apparently left the ship at Nova Albion and walked back to Mexico; and three blacks captured off the coast of South or Central America were put ashore on Crab Island in the East Indies. These five events do not take into account the disappearance of other crew members who may have been left at Nova Albion.

The explanation given by John Drake for the marooning of the three blacks was to "found a settlement." Obviously, the real purpose was to avoid having an infant on board the ship for the final nine months of its voyage.

30. The accounts do not explain how the personnel of these two ships were reassigned. Indications are that Drake transferred most of them to the *Golden Hind*, which may have had ninety or more persons on board when it emerged from the Straits of Magellan in September, 1578.
31. Nuttall, *New Light on Drake*, 42, tells of this incident as reported in Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimes in Five Bookes* (London, 1625), part IV. Among the eight men thus abandoned to their fate, only Peter Carder succeeded in returning to England. The others perished after enduring the most severe privation and hardship.
32. In 1579 and 1580, da Silva was subjected to four depositions, two of them before the infamous Spanish Inquisition. As a Portuguese who had been associated with Drake for over a year, his reception by the Spaniards was not friendly.
33. The so-called "Anonymous Narrative" reported that Maria had been "gotten with childe between the captaine and his men pirates," and by the time they reached Celebes in November, 1579, she had become "very great." Wagner, *Drake's Voyage*, 271.
34. See also Aker, "Report of Findings," 333-334, for a discussion of why "there is good reason to conjecture that the missing members of Drake's crew remained at Nova Albion."

“He did not have a fair trial”

California Progressives React to the Leo Frank Case

Historians have mined the Progressive Era almost to exhaustion. During the past quarter-century they have completed an enormous amount of research on the years 1900–1917, and with few exceptions, no period in American history has spawned so much original and incisive scholarship.¹ Yet despite the rich abundance of the literature, the Leo Frank case, one of the most sensational criminal prosecutions of the era, has attracted little attention. To be sure, Leonard Dinnerstein has written what has rightfully been considered the classic work on the subject,² but historians have failed to analyze the relationship of the case to broader concerns in America at the time and have thus far lost an opportunity to shed additional light on what one scholar has called “that rather elusive abstraction, the progressive mind.”³ Indeed few events of the period open a more revealing window on the spirit and motivation behind progressivism than the Leo Frank trial and its aftermath.

This is particularly true in the case of California. Although thousands of miles from Atlanta, Georgia, where the trial took place, Californians reacted strongly to the ordeal of Leo Frank, and in so doing they revealed a good deal about themselves. In fact the trial and its consequences occurred at a time when California stood almost alone in the progressive column.⁴ As historian George Mowry has pointed out, with the exception of California, the progressive defeat in the elections of

1914 “had been almost total.”⁵ In other words, during the early years of World War I, California was still involved in airing and debating reform issues, many of which were brought more clearly and dramatically to the surface by the Leo Frank case. Such matters as capital punishment, child labor, the role of women in society, law and order, and anti-Semitism were just several of the key problems given new impetus by the trial in Atlanta. What remains to be determined, therefore, is how California progressives—Progressive Republicans or Wilsonian Democrats—reacted within the context of the Frank case to these long-standing but recently revived issues. Did the progressive reaction, for example, differ from the so-called conservative one?⁶ Furthermore, what role did the highly influential (but historiographically neglected) California Jewish community play in this struggle to gain justice for Frank, a fellow Jew? And finally, how does one account for the extraordinarily strong support which California as a whole expressed for Frank?

Any attempt to answer these questions must begin with the Frank case itself. Leo M. Frank, the son of a prosperous New York merchant, had arrived in Atlanta to manage the National Pencil Factory, a business in which he had a small financial interest. Like many other industries of the period, the factory employed young girls at low wages. When one of these employees, thirteen-year-old Mary Phagan, was found beaten and murdered in the basement of the factory, rumor linked Frank with the crime. On April 29, 1913, three days after the murder occurred, Frank was arrested and

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charged with the offense.⁷ According to the Atlanta police, the main piece of evidence against the accused was the testimony of Jim Conley, a black ex-convict who worked as a janitor at the factory and who claimed to have helped Frank carry the body to the cellar of the building. When the trial opened in early August, 1913, the prosecuting attorney successfully based much of his argument on Conley's statement; within three weeks, twenty-nine-year-old Leo Frank was convicted and sentenced to be hanged.⁸

Many people, then and later, were of the opinion that Conley not only lied at the trial but that he himself was probably the murderer. Why did the prosecution fail to press the case against Conley? The pastor of the Baptist church attended by Mary Phagan's family probably explained it best when he pointed out that "this one old Negro would be poor atonement for the life of this innocent girl." When "the police arrested a Jew, and a Yankee Jew at that," he continued, "all of the inborn prejudice against Jews rose up in a feeling of satisfaction that here would be a victim worthy to pay for the crime."⁹ Thus Frank was made the scapegoat for tensions prevalent in Georgia at the time—a situation scholar John Higham has described in the following terms:

A rising crime rate and anxiety over law and order, an increasing rigidity and punitiveness in racial discipline, an embattled defense of sexual purity, a baffled rage at industrial oppression—these were some of the emotions that swirled around the courtroom in Atlanta. Above all, Leo Frank was hated as an outsider, who focused the multiple fears the new prejudice brought together. Frank was not a southerner. He was a northern Jew. . . . In the most fundamental sense he was seen as a deviant . . . who incarnated all the alien forces that threatened the traditional culture.¹⁰

Whatever the circumstances surrounding Frank's conviction, the case at first attracted little attention outside of the South.¹¹ In the state of California, for instance, the Hearst papers were the only ones in August, 1913,

A Dishonored Seal.



From the Los Angeles Times, August 18, 1915

even to mention the trial.¹² It was only after the verdict was in and the sentence handed down that news slowly spread about the judicial inequities in the proceedings against Frank. In the first place, it was apparent that the hearsay presented at the trial to suggest prior acts of sexual misconduct by the defendant had prejudiced his case in the minds of the jurors and should have been ruled inadmissible. Secondly, it was also obvious that the popular sentiment in Atlanta against Frank, who was frequently referred to as the “damn Jew,” had influenced some members of the jury. After the trial several jurors disclosed that their lives would have been endangered if they had not rendered a guilty verdict. Thirdly, the judge himself expressed doubts about Frank’s guilt, certain grounds for a new trial.¹³

Convinced that Frank was the victim of “bloodthirsty” anti-Semitism, influential and wealthy northern Jews, working through the American Jewish Congress (which had been established in 1906 to aid Jews who were denied civil or religious rights), led and financed a legal battle for a new hearing. Throughout the remainder of 1913 and all through 1914, their efforts proved to no avail; twice the Georgia supreme court turned down motions for a new trial.¹⁴

Frank’s final hope for judicial action rested with the United States Supreme Court. Reluctant at first to consider the case, the nation’s highest tribunal eventually acquiesced when Frank’s attorney introduced a new legal argument based on the fact that Frank was denied due process of law because he was not present in the courtroom at the time the verdict was read. Frank had been forced to absent himself, the lawyer emphasized, because of the hostility of the spectators at the trial. After several months of deliberation, the Supreme Court on April 19, 1915, rejected the defense motion by a vote of

seven to two. In short, the majority ruled that the irregularities in Frank’s trial were minor in nature, that the Georgia courts accorded him the fullest opportunity to be heard, and that he was deprived of no right guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. The two dissenting justices, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Charles Evans Hughes, vigorously disagreed with the ruling. It was evident, they maintained, that the “jury responded to the passions of the mob” and that Leo Frank therefore had not been granted a fair trial.¹⁵

Popular opinion in the northern states overwhelmingly sustained the views of the dissenting justices.¹⁶ In California, despite bitter political divisions on numerous other issues, there seemed to be a consensus of opinion on this particular one. “This man may be guilty or he may be innocent,” editorialized the conservative *San Francisco Chronicle*, “but the impression we get . . . is that he certainly did not have a fair trial, and that if hung, it will be as much without due process of law as if he had been hung directly by the mob. . . .”¹⁷ Other conservative newspapers and spokesmen throughout the state expressed similar opinions. The *San Leandro Reporter* insisted that the Supreme Court “dodged the essential issue—that of the fairness of his trial,” while the *Oakland Tribune* noted that “feeling among the excitable and lower elements in Atlanta ran high at the time of the trial and undoubtedly there was an effort to terrorize the jury.”¹⁸ Some California conservatives went even further, suggesting that not only was the jury influenced by outside agitators, but that the state’s leading witness, Jim Conley, who had “a notorious reputation for lying,” had perjured himself. Mayor Henry Rose of Los Angeles, for example, publicly maintained (in a racist but revealing remark) that he “would not hang a yellow cur on the evidence of that Negro.”¹⁹

Most California progressives also condemned the court’s decision and championed Frank’s cause—with one noticeable exception. The vast majority of progressives agreed with C. K. McClatchy, editor of the *Sacramento*

Bee, who argued that the nation's highest tribunal should have exerted its power so that justice might have been done.²⁰ The *Fresno Morning Republican*, however, flatly disagreed. Considered one of the leading progressive organs in the state, it was published by Chester H. Rowell, a member of the Progressive National Committee and a close adviser to Governor Hiram Johnson. Given these impeccable reform credentials, it was all the more surprising therefore when the *Republican* came out with an editorial approving the Supreme Court's actions on the grounds that a state was responsible for the conduct of criminal trials and that because the supreme court of Georgia had decided that due process of law was not violated, the United States Supreme Court exercised both restraint and wisdom in upholding that ruling. After discussing the judicial aspects of the case, the *Republican* went on to warn its readers not to be deceived by the flurry of publications which had appeared in defense of Frank, for they were designed to arouse "interest in the condemned man as the 'under-dog.' It has been the old trick of putting the prosecution on trial in an attempt to obscure the issue as against the accused murderer."²¹

The Fresno paper's editorial, to say the least, angered many progressives, including Meyer Lissner of Los Angeles. Lissner, a successful businessman and lawyer and one of the early founders of the progressive movement in California, was serving with Rowell on the Progressive National Committee as well as editing the *California Outlook*, the state's "official" reform journal.²² As a Jew, moreover, Lissner took a special interest in the Frank case. In a letter to Rowell, he expressed considerable disappointment over the editorial. "It seems to me," Lissner wrote, "that if there ever was a case of a man being convicted of a crime which he was absolutely innocent and in which the circumstantial evidence pointed most clearly in another direction, this is the one. In my opinion it would be a blot on the escutcheon of this nation to kill this man."²³ As things turned out,

After the trial several jurors disclosed that their lives would have been endangered if they had not rendered a guilty verdict.

however, Rowell had neither written nor authorized the editorial. As he explained to Lissner: "It happens that the editorial on the Frank case was one of the few editorials which I did not write myself, and knew nothing about." Furthermore, Rowell assured his political colleague, "If I had been doing it, I should not have taken that position."²⁴

Rowell's explanation proved satisfactory to Lissner. It also suggested that whoever wrote the controversial editorial for the *Republican* was expressing an isolated opinion which had little support within progressive ranks.²⁵

Progressive unity was also apparent in another issue raised by the case. Progressives argued that if the state of Georgia had had legislation protecting and safeguarding the rights of children (especially young girls) engaged in factory work, the crime itself could have been prevented. California progressives, in fact, were quick to point to their own accomplishments in this area. Under their leadership, the state legislature of 1911 had adopted an eight-hour day for women and measures which imposed restrictions on child labor, while successive legislatures had enacted laws establishing a minimum wage for women and children and a higher age limit at which children might first be employed.²⁶ Armed with these impressive achievements California progressives attacked the state of Georgia with a vengeance. Anna M. Reed, poet, editor, and long-time advocate of reform, declared that Georgia provided a "poor basis for civilization" since "forty-five percent of the children between the ages of 10 and 13 are ground to a living death daily in the

mills of labor." Believing that Frank was innocent of the crime he was accused, Reed went on to urge that the real criminals were those who supported the state laws of Georgia which permitted "the exploitation of the child population for the benefit of her economic rulers."²⁷ Another outspoken California progressive, Fremont Older, the nationally known editor of the *San Francisco Bulletin*, added his voice to those who held Georgia's lawmakers responsible for the crime. "Far better, by proper education, by proper inspection of factories and factory conditions, to have forestalled and prevented the crime. . . . But Georgia chivalry did not consider it," Older sarcastically concluded.²⁸

Older's views on child labor legislation were probably as repugnant to California conservatives as they were to "Georgia chivalry." In arguments supporting Frank, conservatives, who were more closely linked to the business community than their political rivals, remained predictably silent on the issue of child labor.²⁹ Nor did they assume a very vocal stand on another problem raised by the case—capital punishment. For that matter, most progressives were equally as reluctant to confront this volatile issue; indeed the few who did were seen by their fellow progressives as radicals bent on disrupting rather than enriching the party. The very head of the reform movement in California, Governor Hiram Johnson, failed to understand why men like Fremont Older, who advocated repeal of the death penalty,³⁰ could not be satisfied with "sane legislation, such as Child Labor Laws, Eight Hour Day for Women, Workmen's Compensation, and the like." Instead, Johnson complained, Older wanted "to abolish all Prisons, free all convicts, and incarcerate society alone"—in short, "wreck the whole Progressive cause by going to extremes. . . ."³¹

Although it seems unlikely that these were Older's objectives, the issue of capital punishment had become very volatile during the Progressive Era. Beginning in 1907 and spurred on by the reform impulse, seven states had abolished the death penalty, including California's

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neighbors to the north, Oregon and Washington. To the south, the state of Arizona was on the brink of doing likewise as Leo Frank awaited his fate.³² It was no coincidence, therefore, that a bill to rid California of capital punishment was introduced into the legislature in early January, 1915. Although it failed passage in the assembly by three votes, what is most significant is that neither progressives nor conservatives as groups strongly favored or opposed the measure. Within both camps there was almost equal division between positive and negative votes, indicating that the balloting was based on personal rather than partisan opinions.³³

The legislative history of the measure, however, does not reveal the extent of the antagonism which most Californians—progressives and conservatives alike—felt toward abolishing capital punishment. Two of the most powerful progressive editors in the state, E. T. Earl of the *Los Angeles Express* and C. K. McClatchy of the *Sacramento Bee*, for example, were just as vehement in their attack on people urging repeal of the death penalty as were such leading conservative editors as Harrison Gray Otis of the *Los Angeles Times* and John P. Young of the *San Francisco Chronicle*.³⁴ In fact, leaders who favored the abolishment of capital punishment took special pains to separate the issue from the Frank case, fearing that the two might become so inextricably intertwined that popular opinion could turn against Frank.³⁵ This concern was not without foundation, as evidenced by an editorial in the progressive *Marysville Appeal* which warned its readers that "sob sisters and fanatics who are

opposed to punishment for crime stop short of nothing in order to create a prejudice in the mind of the public in favor of the accused, and this may apply in the Frank case. . . ."³⁶

That a reform-minded paper expressed these thoughts about capital punishment was somewhat surprising in light of the apparent violations of Frank's constitutional rights during his trial. Equally as puzzling was the reaction of progressives to another glaring issue raised by the trial—anti-Semitism or, as it was referred to by contemporaries, "race prejudice." Here, again, progressives failed to face the problem head-on. For example, Irving Martin, editor of the influential *Stockton Record* and one of Hiram Johnson's strongest supporters, firmly denied that

race prejudice was responsible for the conviction of Leo Frank. The charge is contradicted by obvious facts. If there is any 'race prejudice' in Georgia, it is against the 'black' race; and a member of that race was a material witness before the 'white' jury that convicted Frank. That fact alone would, under ordinary circumstances, have operated in favor of the accused white man. Doubtless the charge of 'race prejudice' [or] sectarian prejudice . . . is a false charge. Judah P. Benjamin [a Jew] was a member of Jefferson Davis' cabinet. No section is more than the South free of bigotry.³⁷

Whether or not Martin's editorial reflected progressive opinion in general is difficult to ascertain, since few progressives (and even fewer conservatives) in California took a public stand on this highly sensitive and potentially explosive problem. Nevertheless, there were those who contradicted the views presented by Martin. Former Governor George C. Pardee, a vigorous exponent of reform, condemned Georgia's "hellish frenzy for Semitic blood evinced in this mockery. . . ." Frank's conviction, insisted Pardee, "was due simply to racial hatred of him because of his being a Jew."³⁸ Alfred Holman of the *Oakland Tribune*—one of the most powerful conservative spokesmen in the state—not only agreed with the ex-governor but attempted to explain the

origins of this anti-Semitic sentiment. "In Georgia, as in many parts of the South," Holman maintained,

business and industrial methods are 'slack.' The go-slow, go-easy habit is fixed in the character of many of the people and is reflected in their ways of life and business. In recent years there has come into Georgia a very considerable number of Jews, trained to business thoroughness, industrious and frugal. They have made themselves felt in industry and in business, and, naturally, have brought about a condition extremely uncomfortable as it related to chronic indifference and indolence. Jealousy and religious prejudice thus are in alliance throughout a considerable part of the South, notably in Georgia. Upon Leo Frank, as a Jew, there has fallen the weight of this unworthy sentiment. . . .³⁹

Revealing as these views may be, the lack of supportive evidence prevents any firm conclusions about the stand of progressives or conservatives as groups on the issue of anti-Semitism. Evidently progressives were divided on the matter, and conservatives were reticent to comment, with the exception of Holman whose statement suggests that conservatives saw the problem from an economic perspective.

Although neither California's progressives nor conservatives were willing to identify themselves politically as firm opponents of anti-Semitism, there is absolutely no doubt where the state's Jewish community stood. Outraged by what had occurred in Atlanta, they were of like mind in believing that Frank was a victim of blatant anti-Jewish sentiment and that only a massive popular campaign might reverse the judgment against him. In fact, as early as December, 1914, a number of California rabbis were espousing Frank's cause in their sermons and were "directing the work of getting up petitions in the prisoner's behalf."⁴⁰ Yet these and similar efforts have gone unnoticed by historians investigating Frank's case, who have focused on activities in the East and Midwest

More newspapers and journals served [California Jewry] than any other ethnic community of comparable numbers in the country.

where Jews lived in much greater numbers—but may not have wielded any greater influence.

By the early twentieth century, California's Jewry had become an influential force in the Golden State. But unlike Jews in other parts of the Union, their prominence in California affairs had little to do with an increase in their numbers at the turn of the century. Of the millions of Eastern European Jews who arrived in the United States at this time, only a handful traveled west; most settled in eastern and to a lesser degree midwestern cities. Thus California's Jewish population experienced no spectacular increase during the Progressive Era. In 1915, out of a total state population of approximately 3,000,000, there were only about 60,000 Jews in California, or 2 percent of the population. Roughly half of California's Jews, moreover, were located in one city, San Francisco, while the second greatest number, about 16,000, lived in Los Angeles. Oakland contained the third largest concentration of some 5,000, and Stockton ranked fourth with a little more than 1,000 Jewish residents.⁴¹

Perhaps what was most striking about the California Jewish community—aside from its achievements in both public and private life⁴²—was the overall acceptance it experienced among non-Jews in the state. In the decade before the First World War, a time of a “noticeable upsurge” in social and economic anti-Semitism in the United States,⁴³ that sentiment was relatively absent in California. This can be explained by a unique set of historical circumstances. To begin with, Jews helped to shape the basic institutions of the state. In San Francisco, for example, a number of pioneer Jewish families con-

tributed significantly to the growth of the city and thereby established “a local respect that was not easily upset, particularly if they filled a vital need in the community.”⁴⁴ Secondly, California and especially San Francisco were not confronted by a sudden intrusion of large numbers of Jews after the turn of the century; instead the Jewish population increased by normal accretion, allowing assimilation to proceed without disruption.⁴⁵ Thirdly, although California Jews, like Jews in the South, found themselves in a society anxious to uphold white supremacy, in California strong anti-Chinese sentiment tended to bind white men together and minimize public displays of anti-Semitism.⁴⁶ Finally, the California Jewish community, largely of German descent and practitioners of reform Judaism,⁴⁷ were far more acceptable in the eyes of Gentile America than the more traditional and religiously conservative and orthodox Eastern European Jews.

Nevertheless, although California Jews had escaped the most blatant forms of anti-Semitism common in other parts of the United States, their position in the early twentieth century was far from secure. With the influx of hundreds of thousands of Jews, albeit far from the West Coast, it was almost inevitable that a new wave of anti-Jewish feeling would emerge. During the Los Angeles mayoralty campaign of 1909, for instance, it was no coincidence that Meyer Lissner was singled out by the *Times* and characterized as a “dirty, ill-kept pawnbroker rubbing his hands in greed and muttering ‘chent by chent.’”⁴⁸ Nor was it surprising that in 1914 a leaflet was circulated in the city of San Francisco calling upon “Mr. White American” to organize and protect his race against Negroes and Jews.⁴⁹ Although these were but isolated expressions of anti-Jewish feeling, they help to explain why Gentile Californians were so politically reluctant to confront and condemn the anti-Semitic overtones apparent in the Leo Frank case.

California's Jewish leaders, on the other hand, were determined to expose the religious bigotry which had

infected Frank's trial. Basing their campaign on humanitarian grounds, they studiously avoided discussing any related issues which might prove politically divisive within the Jewish community. Like Jews throughout the northern states, California's Jews were not attached to one political camp, though a majority identified more closely with the Republican party for its "idealism" of Abraham Lincoln and its greater readiness "to relieve the misery of persecuted Jews in Eastern Europe."⁵⁰ This affinity combined with a traditional concern for liberal objectives, resulting in more Jews supporting Hiram Johnson and the progressive movement than the conservative cause.⁵¹ In fact some scholars have argued that the Jews of California were the most extreme progressives, because several of their number were prominent in drafting and implementing reform legislation in the state and many of their religious leaders served in the vanguard of the anti-capital punishment movement.⁵² It was therefore natural that they would emerge as a powerful force in the struggle to seek justice for Leo Frank.

California Jews were well equipped to publicize Frank's cause, for more newspapers and journals served them at that time than any other ethnic community of comparable numbers in the country. In 1910 there had been only four Jewish weeklies available in the state, but in the next half-decade, reflecting a heightened concern over the rise of anti-Semitism and related issues both in the United States and abroad, seven additional publications appeared.⁵³ In short, California Jews had both the means and influence to make their views felt concerning the Frank case—and they did not shrink from the task.

Convinced that Frank was made the scapegoat for "blind passion, race hatred and an inflamed, unreasoning public opinion,"⁵⁴ Jewish leaders demanded that appropriate action be taken to save Frank. Nowhere in the state was this demand more fervently met than in San Francisco, where many people believed that there were unmistakable similarities between Frank's trial and the

recent local case of Abe Ruef. A San Francisco political boss in the early years of the century, Ruef, along with a number of other municipal officials, had been tried on corruption charges, but only his conviction had been upheld, and he alone had been sent to prison.⁵⁵ Inevitably many Jews concluded that Ruef had been singled out because of anti-Semitism and that the atmosphere at his trial "was identical with that surrounding the Frank case in Atlanta."⁵⁶ Although this analogy was incorrect (modern historians have found little anti-Semitism in the judicial proceedings involving Ruef),⁵⁷ the fact that Frank's prosecuting attorney emphasized the activities of such "Jewish criminals as Abe Ruef" no doubt gave further credence to those who drew parallels between the cases.⁵⁸ As a result, most California Jews probably agreed with the editor of the Los Angeles *B'nai B'rith Messenger* who, mincing few words, declared that "the Frank case [had] degenerated somewhat into a Jewish question."⁵⁹ Offering the only possible solution to this dilemma, the *San Francisco Emanu-El*, the state's most prominent Anglo-Jewish weekly, argued that if "race hatred and vengeance" was not to supersede the "dispassionate analysis of law and fact," then the governor of Georgia must act, "if not to restore Frank to liberty, to at least commute his sentence to life imprisonment."⁶⁰

Commutation of Frank's sentence became the prime objective sought by most Jews active in the case. This would provide the necessary time, as Rabbi Michael Fried of Sacramento commented, to find the truth so that the real "murderer will be apprehended, and Frank's innocence will be established."⁶¹ Consequently, a campaign was launched by California Jewry both to inform the public of the inequities in Frank's trial and to pressure Georgia Governor John M. Slaton to commute the sentence. Meyer Lissner, for one, allowed the editorial

Political leaders in California . . . supported the call for executive clemency [because] Frank's execution would have an obvious derogatory effect upon the American judicial system.

columns of his *California Outlook* to be used to rouse sentiment in favor of Frank's cause.⁶² Having spoken with the famous detective, William J. Burns, who had investigated the case for the defense, Lissner was certain that there was no question of the innocence of Frank and no doubt of the guilt of Conley, the janitor.⁶³ Other Los Angeles Jews held the same opinion and contributed their efforts to the struggle.⁶⁴ In Northern California the movement was even more intense. San Francisco's most influential rabbis, Martin Meyer of Temple Emanu-El and Jacob Nieto of Temple Sherith Israel, delivered sermons, circulated petitions, and wrote letters for the commutation of Frank's sentence.⁶⁵ The outspoken Rabbi Meyer was so caught up in the struggle that he embarked upon a lecture tour across the East "in the hope of arousing increased sympathy for the young Jew."⁶⁶

By late spring of 1915 their efforts were beginning to bear fruit. For one thing, many non-Jews throughout the nation began recognizing the "immense volume of doubt" surrounding Frank's guilt and became involved in the movement. "Organizations here, regardless of sect or religion," noted a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "are preparing to send appeals to Governor Slaton to at least commute the sentence of the condemned man until the flight of time may unravel the tangled skein of evidence."⁶⁷ Appeals by non-Jews, though, generally avoided the controversial issue of anti-Semitism and concentrated on the legal implications

raised by the trial. For example, San Francisco Supervisor Alexander T. Vogelsang wrote to the Georgia governor that the execution of Frank "would have a tendency to bring with it a profound disrespect of the law among millions of people, who now hold it in veneration."⁶⁸ Vogelsang's colleagues on the board of supervisors took a similar tack when they unanimously adopted resolutions favoring a reprieve.⁶⁹ In fact most political leaders and spokesmen in California, conservative and progressive, vigorously supported the call for executive clemency. Evidence indicates that their arguments were basically the same; namely, that Frank's execution would have an obvious derogatory effect upon the American judicial system.⁷⁰

As the day for Frank's execution drew near, Californians awaited the Georgia governor's word "with bated breath, hoping that his decision will be in accord with justice and nothing more."⁷¹ They were not to be disappointed—at least for the moment. On June 21, 1915, the day before Frank's scheduled death, Governor Slaton publicly expressed doubt about the young man's guilt and commuted his sentence to life imprisonment.⁷²

"Throughout the nation," historian Leonard Dinnerstein has written, "the press and the public responded jubilantly to the commutation."⁷³ Californians of diverse political and religious backgrounds generally agreed that Slaton's decision was judicially sound and morally courageous.⁷⁴ Of course, the state's Jews were especially pleased with the governor's action.⁷⁵ In an interview with the *San Francisco Examiner*, Lucius L. Solomons, a well-known attorney in the city and vice-president of the national organization of the B'nai B'rith, best encapsulated Jewish sentiment when he declared that the commutation order was not only a triumph for Leo Frank but a "great victory for the Jewish people."⁷⁶

In some quarters Slaton's announcement was also viewed as a sign of "new hope" in the struggle to abolish the death penalty.⁷⁷ Irving Martin of the *Stockton Record*, no friend of the movement, conceded that the sparing

of Frank's life suggested that capital punishment was nothing more than "class law" applied only to those who had neither resources nor friends to plead their case before the public and create the necessary doubt as to their guilt. After all, noted Martin "doubtless a thousand men have been hanged on evidence no stronger than that adduced against Leo Frank. When it becomes apparent that only unfortunates are selected as vicarious sacrifices for the principle of blood atonement," the editor prophesied, "the law of capital punishment will fall into general disrepute."⁷⁸

While Martin's views warranted further consideration, few Californians took note of them. A general distaste for the topic combined with elation over the governor's action probably discouraged any serious discussion of the commutation's relationship to the issue of the death penalty. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that the decision made by Slaton was a just one, that it would now allow time for the truth to surface, and that Frank's innocence would ultimately be established.⁷⁹ As events unfolded, however, this was not the case. On August 16, less than two months after Frank's death sentence had been commuted, a band of twenty-five men snatched him from his jail in Milledgeville, Georgia, drove all night to the outskirts of Marietta (the hometown of Mary Phagan, the murdered girl), and lynched him.⁸⁰

"Language is impotent to fitly characterize the act of the twenty-five murderers," charged Harrison Gray Otis of the *Los Angeles Times*.⁸¹ Meyer Lissner, long an opponent of Otis, found himself in full accord with the conservative editor. Writing in the *California Outlook*, Lissner severely condemned the hanging. "It is the savagery of the dark ages, with its blending of superstition, of religious frenzy, of racial prejudice, of blood lust and ingenious cruelty, that alone can bring forth such fruit."⁸² In other parts of the state reactions were similar. The lynching of Leo Frank, the conservative *Santa Rosa Republican* insisted, "was one of the most cowardly, most uncivilized crimes this nation will ever be called

An investigation was ordered, but, given the support . . . for the lynchers, it proved fruitless. The conspirators (several of whom offered interviews to reporters) escaped judicial prosecution.

upon to explain."⁸³ Fremont Older of the *San Francisco Bulletin* stated with even stronger language: "Georgia is mad with her own virtue. She is not civilized, she is not Christian, she is not sane."⁸⁴ Across the bay in Oakland, the *Tribune* hypothesized that even if evidence came to light to prove Frank guilty, it would not wipe out the stain on Georgia."⁸⁵

California Jews, shocked and dismayed, expressed themselves in the same unforgiving terms. After noting with irony that Georgia had been founded as a "refuge for the oppressed," San Francisco Rabbi Bernard M. Kaplan concluded that this "terrible crime" against Frank would "leave an everlasting stigma on the state."⁸⁶ Others believed that drastic punishment was in order. The *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger* went as far as to suggest that all Jews leave Georgia and "good non-Jews do likewise, and thus let it be left to murderers and assassins. Georgia ought to be fenced off until it has expiated its guilt."⁸⁷

To the great disappointment of law-abiding citizens throughout the nation, Georgia did nothing to atone for its guilt. An investigation was ordered, but, given the popular support in the state for the lynchers, it proved fruitless. All of the conspirators (several of whom offered interviews to reporters) escaped judicial prosecution.⁸⁸ Perhaps Meyer Lissner came closest to the truth when he wrote that Leo Frank's fate "was decreed. The police, determined to admit no mistake on their part, doomed him; the mob, incited by a yellow press and by shameless demagogues, howled for his life; and the

chivalry of Georgia bowed to the mob's frenzy and registered its verdict. From his arrest to the last fell act, he had no chance of escape."⁸⁹

Few would deny that Californians had struggled valiantly to save the young man, although citizens in other states, of course, also launched campaigns in Frank's behalf.⁹⁰ The western state's strong reform impulse, combined with the influence exerted by its active and prosperous Jewish community, resulted in catapulting the state into the vanguard seeking justice for Frank.

Equally important is the fact that Californians, by focusing on the Frank case, revealed much about themselves. First and foremost, they showed that whatever their political affiliations, they were of like mind about violations of fundamental civil rights, at least the rights of white men. Conservatives were no less outspoken in their advocacy of Frank's cause than were their more liberal political rivals, the progressives. True, conservatives tended to view the Frank case in purely legal terms, while progressives, in addition to condemning the judicial inequities of the trial, also emphasized aspects of social injustice such as child labor and the treatment of women which directly related to the affair. On the other hand, aside from a few extreme progressives, neither political group was willing to focus on the explosive issues of capital punishment and anti-Semitism—matters which the Atlanta trial inevitably brought to the surface. California progressives might have been genuinely concerned about these social issues, but in light of their reluctance to confront them, the George Mowry-Richard Hofstadter thesis of the "mild, middle-class" nature of progressive reform still seems valid.⁹¹

Notes

1. For the historiography of progressivism, see Robert H. Wiebe, "The Progressive Years, 1900-1917," in William H. Cartwright and Richard L. Watson, Jr., eds., *The Reinterpretation of American History and Culture* (Washington, D.C., 1973), pp. 425-442; and Arthur Mann, "The Progressive Tradition," in John Higham, ed., *The Reconstruction of American History* (New York, 1962), pp. 157-179.
2. Leonard Dinnerstein, *The Leo Frank Case* (New York, 1968).
3. Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese Movement in California and the Struggle for Japanese Exclusion* (New York, 1973), p. 131, n. 15.
4. Spencer C. Olin, Jr., *California's Prodigal Sons: Hiram Johnson and the Progressives, 1911-1917* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1968), pp. 169-184.
5. George E. Mowry, *The California Progressives* (Berkeley, 1951), p. 221; Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 103. For an analysis of the decline of progressivism in 1913-1914, see Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era* (New York, 1954), 75.
6. A California progressive is defined herein as one who generally supported the reform movement, whether he or she was Progressive Republican or Wilsonian Democrat in orientation. A California conservative, on the other hand, is defined as one who favored William H. Taft in the presidential election of 1912 and opposed reform efforts.
7. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 1-35.
8. *Ibid.*, 36-61.
9. *Ibid.*, 33.
10. John Higham, *Send These To Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America* (New York, 1975), p. 186; see also Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 62-76.
11. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 62.
12. See, for example, *San Francisco Examiner*, August 26, 1913; *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 26, 1913.
13. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 74, 82-83.
14. *Ibid.*, 62, 83-84, 99, 107-109.
15. *Ibid.*, 109-113.
16. *Ibid.*, 113.
17. *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 21, 1915.
18. *San Leandro Reporter*, June 26, 1915; *Oakland Tribune*, June 23, 1915.
19. *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915; Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 51.
20. *Sacramento Bee*, April 22, 1915. See also *Bakersfield Californian*, April 22, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, April 20, 1915.
21. *Fresno Morning Republican*, April 20, 1915.
22. Mowry, *California Progressives*, 43, 326.
23. Meyer Lissner to Chester H. Rowell, April 23, 1915, Chester H. Rowell Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

24. Chester H. Rowell to Meyer Lissner, May 1, 1915, Rowell Papers.
25. The *Marysville Appeal* reprinted the *Fresno Republican* editorial on April 22, 1915, and was the only other progressive paper supporting this anti-Frank position.
26. Franklin Hichborn, *Story of the Session of the California Legislature of 1915* (San Francisco, 1916), pp. 174-178, 189; Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 48-49. See also *Stockton Record*, June 19, 1915; *San Francisco Call and Post*, August 18, 1915.
27. *Petaluma Northern Crown*, August 1915.
28. *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 19, 1915.
29. One of the few exceptions was the *San Jose Mercury Herald*, a staunchly conservative paper, which called for national legislation to regulate child labor, but made no mention of the Frank case. See *San Jose Mercury Herald*, June 18, 1915.
30. For Older's views on capital punishment, see Robert W. Davenport, "Fremont Older in San Francisco Journalism: A Partial Biography, 1856-1917" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1969), pp. 323-324 and Evelyn Wells, *Fremont Older* (New York, 1936), pp. 241-243.
31. Hiram Johnson to Theodore Roosevelt, August 19, 1914, Hiram Johnson Papers, Bancroft Library. Although Johnson rarely remained silent on leading issues of the day, he took no public stand on the Frank case. This may be explained by the fact that at the time the case was under discussion, there were twelve men in California prisons sentenced to death. The governor probably realized the impropriety of speaking out on the Frank trial when he himself was considering possible reprieves or commutations of death sentences within his own state. For background information on this problem, see E. T. Earl to Johnson, March 4, 1915; Johnson to Earl, March 9, 1915; Johnson to Fremont Older, September 20, 1914, March 9, 15, 24, 1915, Johnson Papers; *Stockton Record*, August 3, 1915; *San Diego Sun*, August 20, September 4, 1915; *Petaluma Northern Crown*, August 1915.
32. Arizona repealed capital punishment in 1916; Missouri followed a year later, bringing the total number of states which abolished the death penalty during the Progressive Era to nine. By 1935, however, all of them had restored capital punishment. William J. Bowers, *Executions in America* (Lexington, Mass., 1974), pp. 6-7.
33. *Journal of the Assembly During the Forty-First Session of the Legislature of the State of California, 1915* (Sacramento, 1915), pp. 108, 956, 1032, 1290, 1556, 1809-1811. See also *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 1, 1915.
34. For a sampling of the views of these editors, see E. T. Earl to Hiram Johnson, October 20, 1915, Johnson Papers; *Sacramento Bee*, August 17, 1915; *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1915; *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1915.
35. See, for example, Jacob Nieto, "[A] few words in regard to . . . a case tried in Atlanta, Georgia," n.d., Jacob Nieto Papers, Western Jewish History Center, Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley.
36. *Marysville Appeal*, June 16, 1915.
37. *Stockton Record*, June 23, 1915.
38. *Oakland Enquirer*, April 20, August 18, 1915.
39. *Oakland Tribune*, June 25, 1915.
40. *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 1915. See also *San Francisco Examiner*, December 27, 1914.
41. *American Jewish Yearbook, 1927-1928* (Philadelphia, 1928), pp. 241-246.
42. See Martin Meyer, *Western Jewry: An Account of the Achievements of the Jews and Judaism in California* (San Francisco, 1916), 9-15.
43. Cary McWilliams, *A Mask for Privilege: Anti-Semitism in America* (Boston, 1948), pp. 23-24; Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (New York, 1959), p. 143; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York, 1963), pp. 160-161; Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 70.
44. Higham, *Send These To Me*, 111-113. See also Earl Raab, "'There's No City Like San Francisco': Profile of a Jewish Community," *Commentary*, 10 (October 1950): 370-371.
45. Higham, *Send These To Me*, 164-165; Raab, "No City Like San Francisco," 372.
46. Higham, *Send These To Me*, 164.
47. Norton B. Stern, *California Jewish History: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Glendale, Calif., 1967), p. 11.
48. *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, October 24, November 27, 1909.
49. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 186.
50. Lawrence H. Fuchs, *The Political Behavior of American Jews* (Glencoe, Ill., 1956), pp. 44-45, 50-51. See also Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right-Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1970* (New York, 1970), p. 103.
51. For California Jews supporting progressivism, see, for example, Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 181; Grace Larsen, "A Progressive in Agriculture: Harris Weinstock," *Agricultural History*, 32 (July 1958): 187-193; Grace Larsen and Henry E. Erdman, "Aaron Sapiro: Genius of Farm Co-operative Promotion," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 49 (September 1962), 243-247; Lawrence Arnstein, "Community Service in California Public Health and Social Welfare," 22-24, typescript of an oral interview conducted by Edna Tartaul Daniel (1964), Bancroft Library. For Jews favoring the conservative cause, see, for example, Otto Irving Wise to Hiram Johnson, March 14, 1917, Johnson Papers; Max Voorspan and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles* (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 136-137.
52. For Jewish involvement in reform measures, see Olin, *California's Prodigal Sons*, 76-80, 105-107, 109-110, 181. For California

- rabbis active in the anti-capital punishment movement, see *San Francisco Emanu-El*, April 23, June 25, 1915; *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 1, 1915; Michael M. Zarchin, *Glimpses of Jewish Life in San Francisco* (Oakland, 1964), p. 132.
53. *American Jewish Yearbook, 1914-1915* (Philadelphia, 1914), pp. 328-334; *Ibid.*, 1915-1916 (Philadelphia, 1915), p. 341; Stern, *California Jewish History*, 157-159.
 54. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 25, 1915.
 55. Walton Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco: The Story of the Union Labor Party, Big Business, and the Graft Prosecution* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), pp. 268-286, 306-308.
 56. Stephen Wise to Hiram Johnson, August 11, 1914, Johnson Papers.
 57. Bean, *Boss Ruef's San Francisco*, 289.
 58. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 53.
 59. *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915.
 60. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 4, 1915.
 61. *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915. See also *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, July 2, 1915.
 62. *California Outlook*, June 26, 1915.
 63. Meyer Lissner to Chester H. Rowell, April 23, 1915, Rowell Papers.
 64. See, for example, *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
 65. *San Francisco Examiner*, December 27, 1914, June 22, 1915; Jacob Nieto, "[A] few words in regard to . . . a case tried in Atlanta, Georgia," n.d.; Jacob Nieto to His Excellency, the Governor of Georgia [June 1915], Nieto Papers.
 66. *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 3, 1915.
 67. *Ibid.*, May 2, 1915.
 68. *Ibid.*
 69. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, May 7, 1915.
 70. See, for example, *Marysville Appeal*, June 12, 16, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, April 20, 1915; *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915; *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1915.
 71. *Marysville Appeal*, June 16, 1915.
 72. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 122-129.
 73. *Ibid.*, 129.
 74. For progressive approval of the commutation, see *San Francisco Bulletin*, June 23, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, June 22, 1915; *Sacramento Bee*, June 24, 1915; *Bakersfield Californian*, June 21, 1915. For conservative praise of the action, see *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 23, 1915; *Oakland Tribune*, June 23, 1915. Also revealing are the surveys of public opinion taken by the Hearst papers; see *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
 75. See, for example, *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 25, 1915; *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, June 25, 1915.
 76. *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
 77. *San Francisco Emanu-El*, June 25, 1915.
 78. *Stockton Record*, June 21, 1915.
 79. *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, July 2, 1915; *Los Angeles Examiner*, June 22, 1915; *San Francisco Examiner*, June 22, 1915.
 80. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 139-140.
 81. *Los Angeles Times*, August 18, 22, 1915.
 82. *California Outlook*, September 1915.
 83. *Santa Rosa Republican*, August 18, 1915.
 84. *San Francisco Bulletin*, August 19, 1915.
 85. *Oakland Tribune*, August 17, 1915. For additional contemporary comment on the lynching, see *San Francisco Examiner*, August 18, 1915; *Oakland Enquirer*, August 17, 19, 1915; *Stockton Record*, August 17, 1915; *Sacramento Bee*, August 21, 1915; *Fresno Morning Republican*, August 18, 1915; *Marysville Appeal*, August 18, 1915; *Livermore Herald*, August 21, 1915; *Alameda Times Star*, August 18, 1915.
 86. *San Francisco Examiner*, August 18, 1915; see also *San Francisco Emanu-El*, August 20, 1915.
 87. *Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger*, September 17, 1915. Former Governor George C. Pardee advanced a similar idea; see *Oakland Enquirer*, August 18, 1915.
 88. Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 145.
 89. *California Outlook*, September 1915.
 90. For a sampling of public opinion concerning the Frank case, see Dinnerstein, *Leo Frank Case*, 74-75, 115-119, 129-130.
 91. Mowry, *California Progressives*, 86-104; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), pp. 131-173.

Labor Pains: An Oral History of California's Women Farmworkers

REVIEWS

Charles Wollenberg, *Reviews Editor*

I am an agricultural working woman. I came to this camp with my husband and baby. I have to get up before the men get up. I feed my baby and then I am supposed to help in the kitchen. If I don't help in the kitchen, people will say, "What kind of woman is she?" Although there is a paid cook, I am supposed to help. I have to go out to work with the men at the same time, taking my baby with me. When we finish work at suppertime, I have to do the cooking and wash the dishes. At night when the baby cries, I have to be extremely careful because we live in a rooming house, and the partition has thin walls. Sometimes I have to take the baby outside in order to quiet it. I am suffering doubly.

Japanese farmworker, Sacramento Delta, 1933

Agriculture is the largest industry in California. At least one out of every three jobs in the state is agriculturally related. Women comprise more than 40 percent of the agricultural labor force, yet agriculture is the only industry in California in which the conditions of its female work force have not been documented by the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor. The history of California's women farmworkers has remained unexplored.

Combining the methods of oral history with those of

Margo McBane is an historian who has worked with the United Farm Workers for several years and has taught history and social studies in California high schools. In 1975 she authored *History of California Agriculture: Focus on Women Farmworkers* (San Francisco).

Mary Winegarden joined the project in the spring of 1978 to produce the radio and slide-tape shows.

Farmworking women such as this Japanese mother photographed with her son in the early 1900s worked full shifts in the fields and cared for families as well.

more traditional historical research, the California women farmworkers project is producing a one-hour radio program and a multi-media slide and tape show to illustrate the role and influence of women in California farm labor. The experiences of the many ethnic and age groups involved in farm labor history are being explored through tape-recorded interviews. Portions of these interviews are integrated into an historical narrative which is broadened by folk, topical, and instrumental music from each historical era.

Interviewees were contacted through labor unions, religious organizations, personal friends, newspaper solicitations, agricultural organizations, and other oral history projects. Translators were used when interviewees did not speak English. As with most oral history interviews, at least two sessions were needed to develop a comfortable rapport with each person. Interviews usually began with the chronology of a person's life followed by questions about the impressions, feelings, and descriptions of specific events which formed the major part of his or her working life. Because sexism was not a conscious issue in the lives of many of these people, interviewers found it important to press for their descriptions of specific experiences rather than their generalizations.

At least seventy interviews averaging two hours in length have been conducted. Most of the tapes and transcripts will be stored at The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Two interviews were cosponsored by the Oral History Project at the University of Michigan, and twelve interviews were sponsored by the Oral History Project at California State University, Fullerton. Major funding for the project has been provided through a grant from the California Council for the Humanities in Public Policy. The Council matches 85 percent of all other contributions to the project. More funds are needed to complete the work.

The primary focus of the women farmworkers project



is the historical effects of women in the fields and packing-sheds. Its central issues include sex discrimination in employment practices, the division of labor in the fields and packing-sheds, the role of women in labor organizing, the struggles for medical care and housing, childcare, and the effects of mechanization on employment. The issues are examined in the context of the eras of California's agricultural history as determined by the dominant ethnic and sex grouping of the workers: Chinese men, 1870-1900; Anglo male "bindlestiffs" or hoboes, 1880-1920; Japanese families, 1900-1924; the Women's Land Army, 1914-1919; Anglo families of "gasoline gypsies" or "Fruit Tramps," 1920-1930; Mexican families, 1920-1940s; Filipino men, 1920-1940s; Dust Bowl families, 1930-1940s; Bracero men, 1942-1964; and farmworker families of the recent years.

In the eras of California's farm labor history when women were prevented from immigrating to the United States (the Chinese, Filipino, and Bracero years), men suffered from inadequate working and living conditions.

A retired Yugoslavian woman farmworker and grower recalled that on one farm, "the Filipinos had a two-story barn for a house. They put their 'patties' on the floor, and forty or fifty would sleep in that place. They had a man or two that were cooks. I don't remember a Filipino woman until the time World War II started." Although the men appeared to be bachelors with transient status, many were sending money to families back home.

When women began working in the fields around the turn of the century, they suffered from restrictive cultural roles, job discrimination, and poor union representation. In addition to being field workers, the women also assumed the jobs of wife and mother. A retired labor camp manager in the 1940s remembered that "there were nearly always more men than women in the fields. Women were thinning, but a lot were chopping cotton, too. In many cases women did more work than the men because they'd do the work in the field all day and then do most of the work at home afterwards and in the mornings. A woman's work was every place; a man's work was just in the fields."

In the fields and packing-sheds, women were rarely hired and paid on an equal job level with men. One woman farmworker recalled, "There are certain jobs that only men did: driving tractors, for instance. I don't remember seeing a woman on a tractor in all the years I was there. Your melons and your tomatoes, plums, pears, peaches are wrapped in paper. That was done by the women in the packing house. I never did see a man doing it."

Although unions normally functioned as advocates for workers, they often did not offer farmworking women equal voice and respect. A woman who organized for the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union and United Cannery, Allied Packing and Agricultural Workers Association unions during the 1930s reflected, "It was absolutely nonsense to expect your co-workers to have any understanding of the

problems you had being a mother, a wife, and an organizer. There was just a total lack of comprehension of what that problem was. You therefore had to be strong enough and determined enough . . . that you went ahead and carved it out."

Women farmworkers today are suffering many of the same difficulties as agricultural women of the past. They continue to carry the double workload of mother and worker, and most farm work is still divided unfairly along gender lines, especially in fields dominated by mechanization. *Campešina*, a preliminary report prepared in 1978 by the California Commission on the Status of Women, observes:

Women farmworkers are not a surplus labor force, since they earn most of their income from farmwork. They can be seen to work a significant part of the farm work and are often heads of households. In spite of the considerable role they play in the agricultural labor force, they face barriers to upward job mobility, fuller employment, and higher annual incomes. They are tax-paying citizens of the United States, yet they lack basic facilities such as adequate housing and health care, as well as services such as child care. . . . They are clear about the positive and negative aspects of agricultural work and seek improved working conditions and benefits only to the degree of comparability to other employment sectors.

The primary goal of the women farmworkers project is to fill the information gap in California's farm labor history. The project will record and document the life stories of an historically voiceless workforce: women farmworkers. The California Commission on the Status of Women has just completed its first survey of current needs of migrant women in Fresno and Imperial counties. Through the oral history project's examination of the historically repetitive problems confronting farmworker women, the commission's survey will gain a more solid foundation from which to make its recommendations for the future.

Book Reviews

A Companion to California.

By James D. Hart. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. viii. 494 pages. \$22.50.)

Reviewed by W. Turrentine Jackson, Professor of California History at the University of California, Davis, and a Fellow of the California Historical Society.

This is an exceptional book. At first glance the casual reader might mistake it for another place name book to augment the volumes by Gudde and the Renschers, but it is much more. True, place names are included. Every dominant geographic feature of California is noted and its significance recorded, including the rivers, valleys, and mountains. There are items on the climate, flora, and fauna. The overriding theme in this context is the uniqueness of the state's geographic features. Each county and major town also rate an entry.

The time span of this compendium is from the Sacred Expeditions (1769) to the present day. Within this historical framework, attention is given to missionaries, Spanish-Mexican rancheros, explorers, pioneer settlers, and developers of the natural resources. Attention to history is only a portion of the volume; emphasis is on the human factor. Individuals who have made a contribution, including politicians, bankers, educators, businessmen, artists, authors, benefactors, and socialites are included. Even notorious criminals are not neglected. Discussions of the careers of living athletes and athletic teams, of entertainers and the entertainment world, emphasize contemporary concerns.

Everything from A to Z is there, and this is an overwhelming feat. Entries under the letter A include major articles on aerospace, agricultural labor, agriculture, apparel industry, and architecture. Personalities reflect the changes in time and the tremendous diversity of interests of California: Ansel Adams, Kurt Adler, Frank Albert, José Alemany, Henry Alexander, Joseph Alioto, George Allen, Juan Bautista Alvarado, Juan Bautista de Anza, Francisco Arce, Luís Argüello, José Arrillaga, Gertrude Atherton, Faxon Dean Atherton, John Audubon, Mary Austin, Gene Autry, and Juan Ayala. What would California be without art, the academy awards, A.C.T. (American Conservatory Theater), the Angels and Athletics, Armenians, apricots, artichokes, avocados, and azaleas?

Reflecting current emphasis, the Indians, as well as other

racial, ethnic, and national groups characterizing California's heterogeneous population are generously recognized. The author's own background and professional interest has resulted in an emphasis and unusual comprehension of the cultural, literary, and social aspects of the state's development.

The title of the book has been felicitously selected. It should, and no doubt will, become a companion to many in, or interested in, California. Tourists and travelers will include the volume in their baggage, scholars and intelligent readers will place it alongside the dictionary in their studies for ready reference. Every native son and daughter will want it prominently displayed on the coffee table. Seldom is a volume published that will serve the diverse needs and interests of so many people. Moreover, few individuals in California have the breadth of vision and the depth of understanding to produce such a cornucopia of history, literature, legend, folklore, and general information. James D. Hart is such a man.

Reminiscences of People and Change in California Agriculture, 1900-1975: J. Earl Coke.

Preface by Harry R. Wellman. Interviews conducted by Ann Foley Scheuring. Davis: University of California, 1976. 265 pp.

Henry Schacht and the Art of Agricultural Communication.

Preface by Hamilton L. Hintz. Interviews conducted by Marvin Brienens. Davis: University of California, 1977. 283 pp.

Reviewed by Paul W. Gates, emeritus Professor of History, Cornell University, who is currently writing on the long battle to modernize American public land policies, 1879-1976.

The careers of J. Earl Coke and Henry Schacht have much in common. Both men were born in Southern California, studied at the University of California, were employed in professional work in agricultural extension and education at the University of California, Berkeley, and took positions in

corporations and banks. Both evidence a conservative point of view although not radically conservative such as the Associated Farmers who resorted to terrorism to defeat labor organizers.

Both men were remarkably successful in impressing their superiors with their abilities. They were pushed up rapidly and achieved outstanding success in their business and professional careers and, in the case of Coke, in a political career also. In what ways and to what degree they influenced agriculture in California is not clear, but that is the hardest question for anyone to answer about himself or others.

Coke at the age of twenty-two was appointed assistant farm adviser to consult with farmers concerning feed, seed selection, methods of harvesting and marketing. At 28 he was made an agronomy specialist, and his experience with farmers growing sugar beets led the Spreckels Sugar Beet Company to select him as their farm advisor. His demonstrated ability in public speaking and writing then caused him to be brought back to the Berkeley university as director of agricultural extension. In 1953 Ezra Taft Benson, newly appointed secretary of agriculture in the Eisenhower cabinet, brought Coke to Washington as assistant secretary of agriculture.

In 1955 Coke returned to California as director of extension but soon became a vice-president of the Bank of America with responsibility in the field of agriculture. The bank was heavily involved in making loans to farmers, particularly to large and corporate farmers, or "agri-businesses" as Coke liked to call them. After ten years with the bank he retired and was then asked by Governor Ronald Reagan to become director, later secretary of the state department of agriculture. In recounting the story of his successes and promotions Coke revealed his attitude toward contemporaries, associates, institutions, and lobbyists. His philosophical views emerge, too. The Farm Bureau was his favorite farm agency, the Grange too weak to really count, the NFO beneath contempt. Coke disliked the Soil Conservation Service and the crop adjustment program for their bureaucratic organization and their interference with the law of supply and demand. The AFL-CIO, the Food and Drug Administration, consumer groups, and "social do-gooders" were dangerous or at the least nuisances. The activities of Cesar Chavez and economist Paul Taylor were deplorable. (Incidentally, UC Berkeley's oral history program has a three-volume oral history of Paul S. Taylor which of course offers a very different perspective.) Coke's remarks

on Governor Reagan, Ezra Taft Benson, the short handle hoe, and the adoption of the California water plan in 1960 are most interesting. Someone was guilty of covering up the real facts about the water plan, but Coke claims the Bank of America could not have been responsible.

Henry Schacht's career advanced equally rapidly, though Schacht did not enter political service. His replies reflect his early interest in writing and speaking which led to his becoming at the age of 22 an information specialist at the university where he delivered radio talks on agricultural problems. In 1942 he was asked to join NBC as their specialist on agriculture. Schacht's long continued column in the *San Francisco Chronicle* seems to have been widely read. By 1961 he had returned to the university as director of agricultural information. In 1965, his services were in demand by both Wells Fargo Bank and the Canners and Growers Coop, but he took the position of vice-president for corporate relations with the latter, "the largest grower-owned cooperative in the world." Cannery and Growers were threatened with heavy loss for a year's pack of cyclamated diet fruits and drinks, and Schacht lobbied hard but unsuccessfully in Washington to change the Food and Drug Administration's ruling. (The Cannery and Growers sold their pack abroad at a heavy loss.) Schacht's account of his innocence at the start of his lobbying career and the skill he developed in this activity is worthwhile reading. He later retired from corporate activity to join a growing army of agricultural consultants.

Coke and Schacht were outstanding figures in agricultural education. Persons interested in their careers and in their fields will find these oral histories useful.

Herbert Eugene Bolton: The Historian and the Man.

By John Francis Bannon. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978. xx, 296 pp. Paper \$8.95, cloth \$15.00.)

Reviewed by Charles Wollenberg, Reviews Editor of California History magazine.

Forty years ago the University of California at Berkeley was a center for the study of the regional history of the Southwest. This was in large part due to the influence of Herbert Bolton, professor of history at Berkeley from 1911 to

*Herbert Eugene Bolton outside his office
at the University of California, Berkeley.*

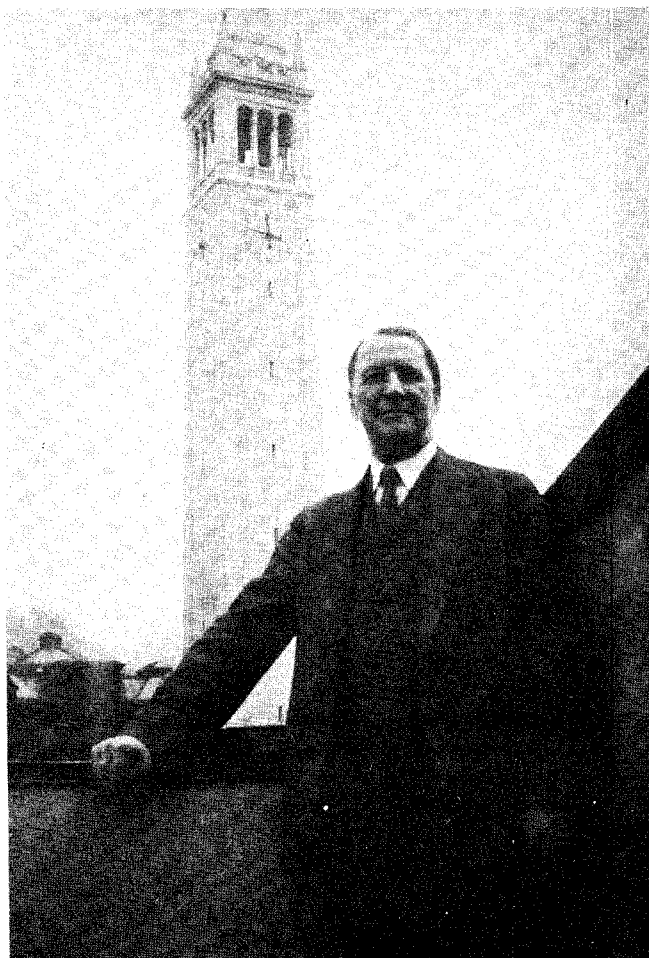
1945 and chairman of the department and director of the Bancroft Library for many of those years. During his long tenure, Bolton supervised more than 100 successful doctoral students, many of whom went on to distinguished teaching careers at colleges and universities throughout the nation. Now, a quarter of a century after Bolton's death, one of those former students, Father John Bannon of St. Louis University, has produced a welcome biography of his mentor.

Not surprisingly, Bannon presents a favorable view of Bolton as a tireless researcher and inspiring teacher whose only fault was an almost constitutional inability to meet publication deadlines. Unfortunately, we learn little about the personal motivations behind Bolton's workaholic ways, but the book does provide a complete account of his career and in the process tells us much about the developing academic historical profession during the early twentieth century.

Bannon argues against the existence of a well-articulated "Boltonian" historical thesis. Certainly it is true that the great bulk of Bolton's work was narrative rather than interpretative history, but Bolton did operate within an intellectual context that at least can be described as a "perspective" if not a "thesis." He viewed American history in hemispheric terms, encompassing both English America and Latin America, and propounded this concept in his famous course, History 8, the History of the Americas. Influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner, his teacher at the University of Wisconsin, Bolton saw the "borderlands" of the Southwest as a focal point of hemispheric history, the place where the English American and Spanish American frontiers met, overlapped, and came into conflict.

This broad perspective has been increasingly rejected by scholars since Bolton's death. American historians have attacked the Turnerian concept of frontier history, while Latin Americanists have concentrated on the complexities of individual national histories rather than the broad sweep of hemispheric themes. Today, few scholars would agree with Bannon that Bolton was "one of the greats," and many would accept John Higham's judgment that "Bolton lacked the analytical ability to make his concept fruitful. . . ."

Nowhere is the decline of the Boltonian perspective more evident than at the Berkeley university. History 8 is no longer taught, and the history department no longer contains specialists in the southwestern region. It may be a reflection of the rootlessness of the contemporary academic



community that, in terms of courses and research interests, the Berkeley department could easily be replicated at universities in Cambridge, New Haven, or Madison.

One does not have to accept the Boltonian perspective to recognize that there is great value in a university concerning itself with the history of its own community and region. Bolton produced solid studies, collected significant primary sources, and trained competent researchers and teachers. His historical generalizations may seem out of date to contemporary scholars, but his career still contains an important lesson for his academic successors. It is that regional and local history is a serious and valuable area of study, one that a great university should not ignore.

The Economic Aspects of the California Missions.

By Robert Archibald. (Washington: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1978. xiii, 196 pp. \$17.50.)

Reviewed by W. Michael Mathes, Professor of History at the University of San Francisco, and author of books and articles on the Spanish Californias.

While the Franciscan missions of Alta California have been the subject of numerous publications, popular and scholarly, specialized studies of certain aspects of the mission system have been relatively few. This new publication of the Academy of American Franciscan History fills a definite need in the field of mission history and is an important contribution to it.

In general, economic history is neither exciting nor spell-binding, and this book is no exception. Furthermore, the reader should be familiar with general mission history prior to examining the economic aspects of it, for the author presupposes such familiarity and limits this study to pastoral, agricultural, mercantile, and financial considerations of the mission system.

Opening with an overview of the Spanish economic system, the author deals with the special nature of Pious Fund allotments, the legal status of San Blas as the supply depot for the Californias, and the *reglamentos* of Gálvez, Escheveste, and Neve relative to price controls and stipends in the mission system. During the early period of missionization in Alta California (1768-1781), price regulation was possible due to the total dependence upon San Blas; however, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, as agriculture and stock raising were established at the missions, they became increasingly self-sufficient, prices were subject to a more realistic supply-demand factor, and dependence upon San Blas became limited to manufactured goods and "luxury" items.

On the local level within Alta California proper, Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the often confusing aspects of mission accounting and reporting, the formulae for annual *padrones*, and the interdependence between missions, civilians, presidios, and government. The latter chapter clarifies the nature of the highly publicized conflicts of authority between the religious and secular state, disputes on paper relative to jurisdictional and fiscal responsibility, which was poorly defined on the frontier of New Spain. Trade, legal and

illegal, with the outside world is treated in Chapter 6 with a discussion of the philosophy of smuggling, and Chapter 7 examines the nature of labor, Indian and Spanish, within the mission system. The concluding chapter deals with the nature and levels of mission agriculture and stock raising, problems of adaptation and mutual support, and the ultimate success of these enterprises which served as cornerstones for modern California's agribusiness.

Extensive archival research by the author in the Biblioteca Nacional and Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla, The Bancroft Library, Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, University of Texas, and Santa Barbara Mission Archives among others make this book a valuable source for early California history. A few errors in Spanish (lack of accents on Fagés and Garcés; "peons" for *peones*) do not severely detract from the contents, and an extensive bibliography enhances this scholarly addition to Californiana.

A Gift to the Street.

By Carol Olwell and Judith Lynch Waldhorn. (San Francisco: Antelope Island Press, 1978. 195 pp. \$12.95.)

Painted Ladies: San Francisco's Resplendent Victorians.

By Morley Baer, Elizabeth Pomada, and Michael Larsen. (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978. 80 pp. \$19.95.)

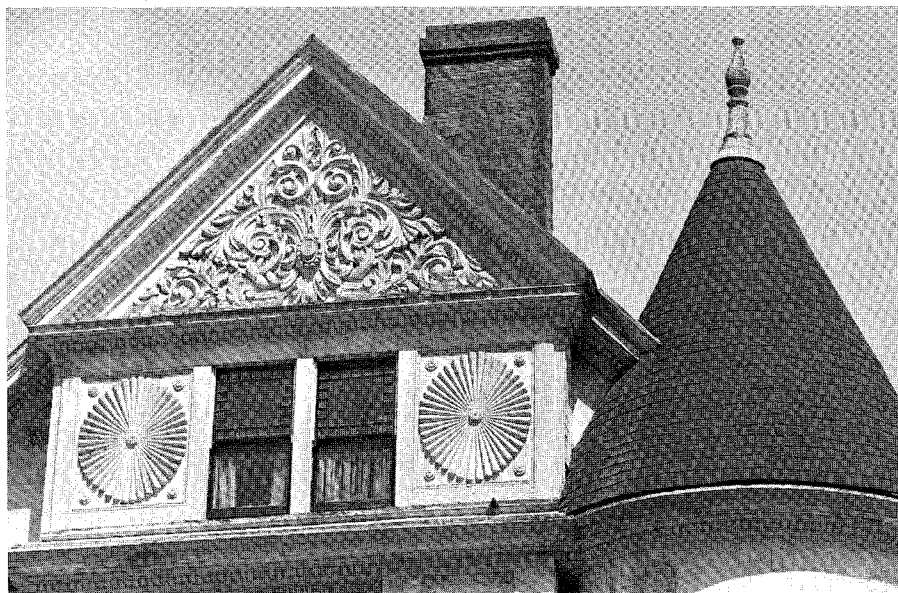
Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture.

By Judith Lynch Waldhorn and Sally B. Woodbridge. (San Francisco: 101 Productions, 1978. 224 pp. Paper \$5.95.)

Reviewed by Elinor Richey, author of books, articles, and encyclopedia essays on architecture and biography.

Vilified not long ago, Victorian domestic architecture today is almost venerated. Is it reaction against sterile modern architecture? Or a yearning for the halcyon era of flickering gaslight? Never mind why, aficionados are legion, and so are books to nourish them, among the new ones being two handsome pictorials and a handy guidebook.

Both pictorials confine themselves to San Francisco Vic-



Architectural details of a weathered but proud San Francisco Victorian.

torian residences; both have brief adequate texts; both have first-rate photographs, knowledgeably focused with a view to delineating architectural line; and both valuably supply street addresses of the houses portrayed. But there the similarity ends. *A Gift to the Street*, a revision of a 1976 book, contains black and white photographs which show us typical San Francisco Victorians, the kind that charmed their way back into our affection. Big ones and little ones, these are mostly painted white or in neutral shades with a complementary trim. The more than 300 photographs by Carol Olwell present a visual feast, variously of generous full views; architectural features such as doorways, windows, cornices, towers; and ornament details including wrought iron, stained glass, plaster faces, and scroll-work. How soothing architectural fretwork can be! We realize how right we were in reembracing it. Architectural ornament fills a real emotional need not satisfied by the merely utilitarian.

Painted Ladies with Morley Baer's sharp, arresting color photographs focuses more narrowly on a particular kind of Victorian, those which have joined the controversial Colorist Movement. This practice, which sprang up in San Francisco in the late 1960s and is growing, involves painting Victorian houses in a variety of bright colors, up to eleven different hues, some schemes including such startling combinations as violet and red, deep greens and blues, lilac and silver, orange and blue, crimson and black. Paint jobs in this mode have aroused the ire of both adjacent residents and aesthetes who decry their departure from tradition. Actually some Victorians were originally given coats of variegated colors, but they were muted earth tones, not these bright primary colors which borrow from modern art. Indeed, some of the combinations might have come right off Mondrian's un-mixed palette. To be sure, these painted ladies, or gilded lilies, have their ardent admirers. But as reaction to them tends to be very polarized, you'd best not give this item as a gift unless you know the recipient's bias.

The guidebook, *Victoria's Legacy: Tours of San Francisco Bay Area Architecture*, has the widest geographical scope, covering the Bay Area from Marin to the Peninsula, from Vallejo to San Jose. Illustrated with both line drawings and black and white photographs, it also supplies maps and other explicit directives to take the reader on rewarding walking tours of San Francisco and on driving tours of the other areas. There are informed essays on construction methods, on the various architectural styles of the era, and on residence interiors—the parlors, kitchens, plumbing, and decoration. The more than a thousand structures that are illustrated or described were mostly built between 1870 and 1906 and include both architect-designed residences and those planned and built by carpenters. Many of the latter were tract developers who duplicated row after row of houses which differed only in the arrangements of the wooden ornament on their fronts. Their sides and rears are usually featureless, the sort of house which gave rise to the expression “a Queen Anne front and a Mary Ann behind.” Ornament components were ordered from planing mill catalogues, and clients were often given a say in the selection and arrangement of the sunbursts, floral cuts, colonnettes, bargeboards, and cartouches. Many such houses sold for less than \$1000. To track down the identity of the carpenters and owners of these modest dwellings, as the authors earnestly did, seems misplaced scholarship. Perhaps the taste pendulum has swung too far when merely pleasant houses are treated as candidates for greatness.

The photographs are from the CHS Collections.

Inadvertantly omitted from the Spring 1979 (volume 58, number 1) issue of *California History* was the source of an illustration appearing in Karl Feichtmeir's article on the online information revolution in California. The sample print-out supplied by the University of California, Berkeley, appearing on page 81, is from the database *America: History and Life* (copyright 1964–1978, ABC-Clio, Inc.).

California Check List

By Gary Kurutz, *Library Director*

The California Check List provides notice of publication of books, pamphlets, and monographs pertaining to the history of California. Readers knowing of recent (1978-79) publications which need additional publicity are requested to send the following bibliographical information to the compiler of this list: Author, title, location and name of publisher, date of publication, number of pages, price, and address where item can be purchased if not carried at general bookstores.

Altieri, Genevieve. *The House on Grant Street*. San Carlos: Altsen Publications, 1978. 215 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 1033, San Carlos 94070. \$5.00.

Arkelian, Marjorie D. and George W. Neubert. *George Inness Landscapes: His Signature Years. 1884-1894*. Oakland: The Oakland Museum Art Department, 1978. 71 pp. Publisher, 100 Oak St., Oakland 94607.

Baird, Joseph A. (ed.) *Theodore Wores and the Beginning of Internationalism in Northern California Painting: 1874-1915*. Davis: Library Associates, 1978. 42 pp. Publisher, University Library, University of California, Davis.

Bleyhl, Norris A. *Indian-White Relations in Northern California 1849-1920*. Chico: Northeastern Regional Program, 1978. 106 pp. Publisher, California State University, Chico 95927.

Bradley, Bill. *The Last of the Great Stations* (Los Angeles' Union Station). Glendale: Interurbans, 1979. 110 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale 91205. \$9.95.

Doss, Margot Patterson. *Golden Gate Park at Your Feet*. (rev. ed.). San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978. 173 pp. Publisher, Box 3515, San Rafael 94902. \$4.95.

———. *There, There. East San Francisco Bay at Your Feet*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1978. 304 pp. \$6.95.

Heizer, Robert F. *The California Indians vs. the United States of America (HR 4497)*. Socorro: Ballena Press, 1978. 130 pp. Publisher: P.O. Box 1366, Socorro, New Mexico 87801. \$5.95.

Hill, Dorothy. *Indians of Chico Rancheria*. Sacramento: Department of Parks and Recreation, 1978. Publisher: P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento 95811. \$4.50.

Hislop, Donald L. *The Nomee Lackee Indian Reservation 1854-1870*. Chico: Association for Northern California Records and Research, 1978. 97 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 3024, Chico 95927. \$7.00.

Howe, Graham et al. (editors). *Two Views of Manzanar: An Exhibition of Photographs by Ansel Adams/Toyo Miyatake*. Los Angeles: Frederick S. Wight Gallery, 1978. 55 pp. Publisher, University of California, Los Angeles 90024. \$5.00.

Kuehn, Gernot. *Views of Los Angeles: 125 Black and White Photographs Contrasting the Past with the Present*. Los Angeles: Portriga Publications, 1978. 138 pp. Publisher, 823 N. Edinburgh Ave., Los Angeles 90046. \$12.95.

Levinson, Robert E. *The Jews in the California Gold Rush*. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1978. 232 pp.

Lewis, Betty. *Watsonville Yesterday*. Watsonville: Mehl's Colonial Chapel, 1978. 146 pp. Available at: Pajaro Valley Historical Association, 261 E. Beach St., Watsonville 95076. \$3.00.

Limbaugh, Ronald H. and Walter A. Payne. *Vacaville. The Heritage of a California Community*. Vacaville: Vacaville City Council, 1978. 325 pp.

McCunn, Ruthanne Lum. *An Illustrated History of the Chinese in America*. San Francisco: Design Enterprises, 1979. 133 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 27677, San Francisco 94127. Cloth \$11.95, paper \$6.95.

McGloin, John Bernard. *San Francisco. The Story of a City*. San Rafael: Presidio Press, 1979. 394 pp. \$16.95.

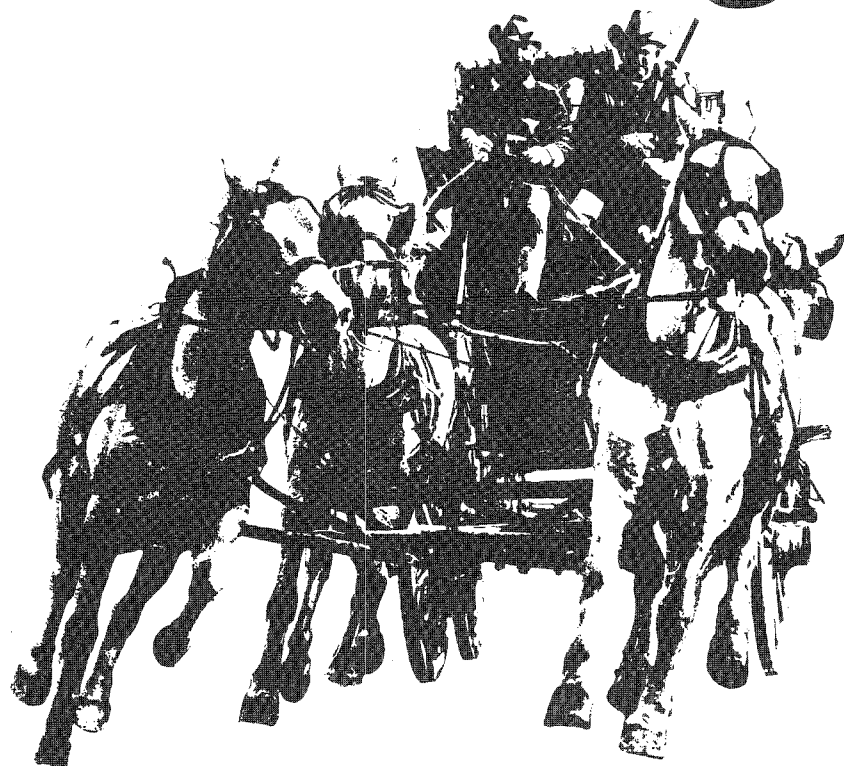
Masri, Allan and Peter Abenheim. *The Golden Hills of California. A Descriptive Guide to the Mother Lode Counties of the Southern Mines*. Fresno: Valley Publisher, 1979. 156 pp. Publisher, 8 East Olive Ave., Fresno 93728. \$4.95.

Mayer, Robert. *San Diego: A Chronological and Documentary History 1535-1976*. Dobbs

- Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1978. 153 pp. \$7.50.
- Meschery, Joanne. *Truckee. An Illustrated History of the Town and Its Surroundings*. Truckee: Rocking Stone Press, 1978. 114 pp. Publisher, Box 1297, Truckee 95734. No price listed.
- Messner, Mike. *Steinbeck Country in Dubious Homage*. Salinas: by the author, 1979. 28 pp. Author, 309 Rose St., Salinas 93901. \$1.25.
- Morrall, June. *Half Moon Bay Memories. The Coastside's Colorful Past*. El Granada: Moonbeam Press, 1978. 176 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 802, El Granada 94018. \$11.95.
- Mosier, Dan L. *California Coal Towns, Coaling Stations and Landings*. San Leandro: Mines Road Books, 1979. 8 pp. Publisher, 1289 Breckenridge St., San Leandro 94579. 85c.
- . *Harrisville and the Livermore Coal Mines*. San Leandro: Mines Road Books, 1978. 184 pp. \$7.00.
- Mutnick, Dorothy G. *One View of Gabriel Moraga and Some of His Explorations*. Lafayette: Past Time, 1979. 57 pp. Publisher, 755 Glenside Dr., Lafayette 94549. \$5.82.
- Norton, Jack. *Genocide in Northwestern California*. San Francisco: The Indian Historian Press, 1979. 155 pp. Publisher, The Chautauqua House, 1451 Masonic Ave., San Francisco 94117. \$9.95.
- Orton, Richard H. *Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1867*. (reprint). Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1978. Publisher, Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226. \$45.00. Index volume, \$22.00.
- Osborne, Robert. *50 Golden Years of Oscar: The Official History of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. La Habra: ESE Publications, 1979. 275 pp. Publisher, 509 N. Harbor Blvd., La Habra 90631. \$24.95.
- Paquette, Mary Grace. *Lest We Forget. The History of the French in Kern County*. Bakersfield: Kern County Historical Society, 1978. 162 pp. Publisher, P.O. Box 141, Bakersfield 93302. \$11.95.
- Parker, J. Caryle (ed.). *An Index to the Biographies in 19th Century California County Histories*. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1979. 279 pp. \$22.00.
- Przygoda, Jack (ed.). *Polish Americans in California 1827-1977*. Los Angeles: Polish American Historical Association, California Chapter, 1978. 372 pp. Publisher, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles 90045. \$12.00.
- Reed, Robert D. *How and Where to Research Your Ethnic-American Cultural Heritage: Mexican Americans*. Saratoga: by the author, 1979. 28 pp. Author, 18581 McFarland Ave., Saratoga 95070. \$2.95.
- Reinhardt, Richard. *Treasure Island, 1939-1940: San Francisco Exposition Years*. Mill Valley: Squarebooks, Inc. 176 pp. \$6.95.
- Roos, Dudley T. (ed.). *The Golden Gazette. News from the Newspapers of 1848-1857*. Fresno: Valley Publishers, 1978. 117 pp. \$7.50.
- Showalter, J. Camille (ed.). *The Many Mizners*. Oakland: The Oakland Museum, 1978. 68 pp. Publisher, 100 Oak St., Oakland 94607. \$8.50.
- Thrapp, Dan L. *Dateline Fort Bowie. Charles Fletcher Lummis Reports on an Apache War*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979. 206 pp. \$10.95.
- Time-Life Books. *The Gamblers (The Old West)*. Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1978. 240 pp. \$10.00.
- Touring with Madge Dittmas*. Arroyo Grande: South (San Luis Obispo) County Historical Society, 1978. Publisher, Box 633, Arroyo Grande 93420. \$2.00.
- Tutorow, Norman E. *Leland Stanford: Man of Many Careers*. Palo Alto: Chadwick House, 1978. 332 pp. Publisher, 200 California Ave., Suite 207, Palo Alto 94306. \$9.95.
- Unruh, John D. *The Plains Across. The Overland Emigrants and the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979. 565 pp. Publisher, Urbana, Illinois 61801. \$22.50.
- Weber, Francis J. (ed.). *Andrew Garriga's Compilation of Herb & Remedies Used by the Indians & Spanish Californians*. Los Angeles: The Plantin Press, 1978. 57 pp. Available at: Dawson's Book Shop, Los Angeles. \$20.00.
- . *California, the Golden State*. San Buenaventura: Junípero Serra Press, 1979. 26 pp. Available at: Dawson's Book Shop. \$10.00.
- . (ed.) *The Observation of Benjamin Cummings Truman on El Camino Real*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1978. 109 pp. \$20.00.
- Winroth, Elizabeth (compiler). *Union Guide to Photograph Collections in the Pacific Northwest*. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1978. 419 pp. Publisher, 1230 S.W. Park, Portland, Oregon. \$15.00.

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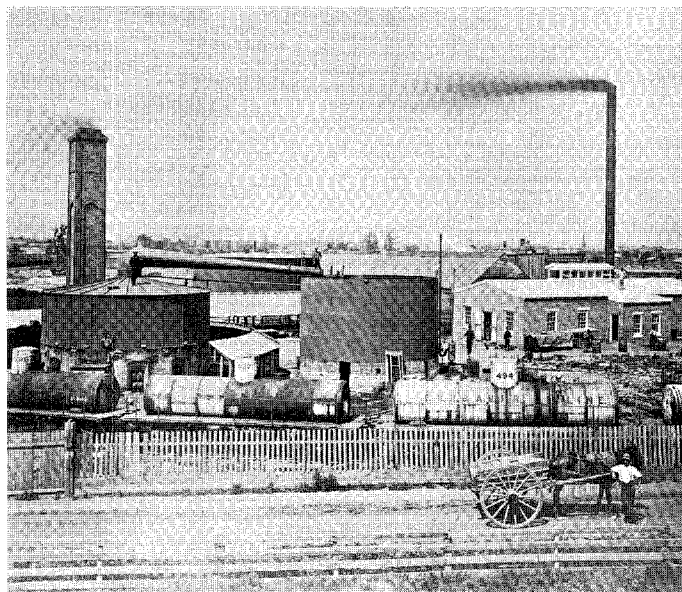
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